STENDHAL

The Pink & the Green

TRANSLATED BY RICHARD HOWARD

FPT ISBN 0-8112-1062-6 >$17.95

STENDHAL

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TRANSLATED WITH AN AFTERWORD BY
RICHARD HOWARD
INTRODUCTION BY MICHEL DÉON

Among the tantilizingly unfinished works of the great French writer Stendhal (1783-1842) are the opening chapters of *The Pink & the Green (Le Rose et le Vert),* which tell of the obsessions of Mina Wanghen, a young, intelligent Prussian heiress from Königsberg. Enamoured of everything French and determined not to be forced into marriage with any one of her countless German suitors, she decamps to Paris, where her illusions meet with Gallic realities. Stendhal abandoned the novel in 1837; however, its seeds are found in the finished story "Mina de Vanghel," completed in 1830 and published posthumously in 1853. Both works now appear for the first time in English.

In the unfinished novel as well as in the earlier story, Mina's tragicomic willfulness is detailed in the careful manner so characteristic of the author. "Stendhal

(continued on back flap)

A NEW DIRECTIONS BOOK

STENDHAL

The Pink & the Green

FOLLOWED BY

Mina de Vanghel

TRANSLATED WITH AN AFTERWORD BY

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A NEW DIRECTIONS BOOK

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Book design by Sylvia Frezzolini
Manufactured in the United States of America
First published clothbound by New Directions in 1988
Published simultaneously in Canada by Penguin Books Canada Limited

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Stendhal, 1783–1842.
[Rose et le vert. English]
The pink & the green ; followed by "Mina de Vanghel" / Stendhal ; translated with an afterword by Richard Howard ; introduction by Michel Deon.
p. cm.
Translation of: Le rose et le vert and Mina de Vanghel.
ISBN 0–8112–1062–6
1. Stendhal, 1783–1842—Translations, English. I. Stendhal, 1783–1842. Mina de Vanghel. English. 1988. II. Title. III. Title: Pink & the green. IV. Title: Pink and the green. V. Title: Mina de Vanghel.
PQ2435.A3H69 1988 87–38321
843'.7—dc 19 CIP

New Directions Books are published for James Laughlin
by New Directions Publishing Corporation,
80 Eighth Avenue, New York 10011

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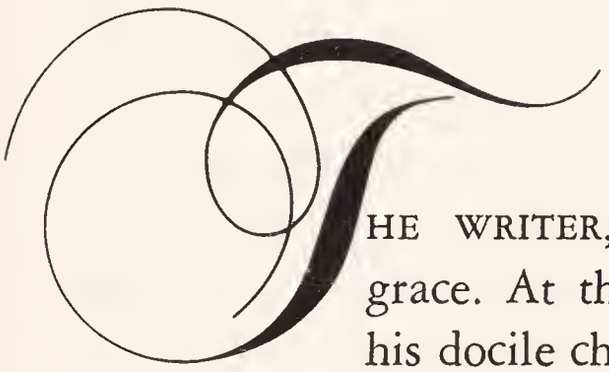
INTRODUCTION



THE WRITER, TOO, KNOWS THE STATE OF grace. At the start of his books, it governs his docile characters who readily believe that their author will lead them toward a "happy end." In this new world—entirely new—he creates at will certain faces, certain characters. But the state of grace cannot always persist. It is generally brief. Creatures born of the imagination rebel, difficulties accumulate, the author realizes he has followed paths that lead nowhere. At least . . . nowhere for the moment: often a little patience, a little time allow him to find the key to apparently insoluble situations.

Stendhal had no patience whatever, and his time seemed in short supply. He had waited too long before beginning to write fiction. When he undertook to dictate *The Charterhouse of Parma,* he certainly had the intuition that there was not a moment to lose. These were two months of astounding pressure. The words "The End" had to be written before the state of grace was dissipated. This was not always the case, as we know: *Lamiel* and *Lucien Leuwen* remain unfinished. A few marginal notes in the manuscript sketch

a conclusion—scarcely credible, complicated, one that most likely would not have been adopted if Stendhal, repossessed by his first impulse, had obeyed his characters.

Stendhal is certainly the first "man in a hurry" in French literature. His biographers struggle to follow him from place to place. We think he is in Milan when he is already in Rome, after a lightninglike round trip to Paris. Yet travel was not so easy in this first part of the nineteenth century; though we see him, with a certain frenzy, using every possible means of transport. There were nonetheless long hours in coaches, and at sea. I have always thought that these hours were among the most fruitful for his imagination. Shaken up as in a salad-spinner, suffering from promiscuous exposure to other travellers, he sought escape by telling himself stories. His splendid memory permitted him to consider the advantage afforded by one of the many Italian chronicles he devoured in the libraries of Milan or of Rome. Many of these stories were published, some fell by the wayside, like *Suora Scolastica.* On other occasions, he seems so eager not to lose the thread of his inspiration that the tale, though concluded, seems to us a mere summary of his intentions. If he had been able to use a dictaphone, he would have left an *oeuvre* as vast, as ambitious as Balzac's. But it is often in this haste of his that we find the best Stendhal, the liveliest, the most incisive. His disdain explodes, he indulges the fits and starts of his wit. He is mordant, unfair, peremptory, paradoxical, digressive, and infinitely seductive. In a word, he is alive, and we recognize ourselves in him.

During his bohemian youth, he had written for the theatre. His plays are as poorly constructed as you can imagine. The dialogue is stiff, without one touch of nature. This is because he tried to compose according to the "rules,"

whereas he was a man to endure no constraint. He loved only freedom, his own pleasure, and following that quasi-magic impulse of the storyteller for whom incidents matter more than plot. His failures in the theatre are piano practice—scales. The real Stendhal is not yet born. He learns, observes, ponders, judges, sifts events and characters. In his *Écrits intimes* we may even find him a little simple-minded, a touch boastful and frequently swaggering. He needs to ripen. For thirty years he accumulates dynamite, and then, one day, the explosion occurs. On the way, there had been sparks. "Mina de Vanghel" is one of these sparks. The tale, written in 1830, was put in a drawer. It was published only in 1853, after his death. Stendhal must have known, immediately after finishing it, that it was a skeleton, the sketch of a novel. The character of this Prussian girl was an impassioned one, but the plot remained far-fetched, and too hurried in the last pages. The characters lacked depth. How to believe in Mina's passion for the colorless Larcay, in those disguises, in that Machiavellianism of a good girl who has read nothing but eighteenth-century love stories? Stendhal was certainly aware of this, and resumed his subject seven years later, in a deepened form. In *The Pink and the Green* (1837), Mina loses her particle, "de," and not a little of her beauty, but the attraction of this sharp-eyed romantic girl remains tremendous. Perhaps Stendhal saw the occasion for showing Parisian society as it looked to an outsider: greedy, conspiratorial, and pretentious. It was no longer he who judged and criticized, it was Mina. Of course his touch is apparent, but unlike Flaubert with Madame Bovary, he could say: *"Mina Wanghen, ce n'est pas moi!"* He had such moments of discretion.

The Stendhal authority Henri Martineau decided, with good reason, that the two versions should be published in

reverse chronological order. *The Pink and the Green* gave evidence, in its first pages, of being a huge novel. The characters are minutely described, and some are extremely interesting, such as the Abbé de Miossince, an utter scoundrel and a hypocrite as well, one of those conservatives Stendhal hated so. Young Montenotte, on the contrary, though he appears rather silly at times, is a typical example of youth's accessibility to a new society in which titles and incomes are no longer the only preoccupations in life. Finally, by removing her particle, the author placed Mina in a situation of inferiority within that Parisian society so enthralled with itself. There is no doubt that Stendhal took great pleasure in sketching this only slightly exaggerated picture. He knew from experience how warmly, how generously foreigners welcomed the French, and how meanly, how crudely the French received foreigners in Paris. Of course he was no tenderer to the Germans, but this could pass for an affirmation of Mina's personality in a world where young ladies had not yet conquered the freedom of Frenchwomen.

Unfortunately, the novel peters out. It is the moment to turn to the first sketch and to dream of what Stendhal might have written if his impulse had not been thwarted, for reasons we do not know. The end of "Mina de Vanghel" is powerful, and dreadfully cruel, but the style is dazzling in its dryness, its violence. At moments, one has the impression of reading Paul Morand—some of those venomous features which are the whole delight of Stendhal.

Thus juxtaposed, these two texts have, in addition to their novelistic interest, a quasi-technical one. We realize something of the mechanism of creation not only in Stendhal, but in all writers: a rocket explodes, followed by a lowering of tension, a sudden lack of interest after a moment of exaltation. An unfinished work tells us more about a novelist

than one for which he has compelled himself to find a conclusion to satisfy his publisher, his readers. The wager has not been kept for reasons that are only too honest, and our disappointment becomes a reverie. Jacques Laurent was able to write an ending for *Lamiel.* One remains to be written for *The Pink and the Green:* Mina playing with the young duke like a cat with a mouse, making him love her and despising him when he is at her feet. She has conquered too easily and discovers the insipidity of victories won over an ill-armed adversary. Like Lamiel, like the Duchess of Sanseverina, like Mathilde de la Mole, Mina is a masculine character. Her will prevails over her heart. That heart has timidly indicated the path—the rest is warrior's work. These women behave like men, and the men they fall in love with are unworthy of them. To have anticipated and heralded this transformation of manners in the 1830s, one really had to love women, and to understand them. Did the task seem too ambitious? We shall never know. Nothing in Stendhal's *Journal* gives us a clue. His health was always an important element. When it broke down, he was alienated from his heroes, and turned in upon himself. Recovered, he would sketch new plans. Seldom, in the entire history of literature, have we seen an author falling in love with his heroines so easily, and detaching himself from them so painlessly.

Michel Déon
of the Académie Française

The Pink & the Green

Stendhal did not complete *The Pink and the Green,* but he left several plans which suggest a possible ending. He worked on the novel in April and May of 1837, then abandoned it. The manuscript, in part the work of a copyist, is in the Grenoble library.

CHAPTER ONE

IT WAS TOWARD THE END OF 183— THAT Major-General Count von Landek returned to Königsberg, his native city, having served many years in the Prussian diplomatic corps. On this occasion he was arriving from Paris. A man of parts, he had formerly shown courage in battle; now he was inveterately in a state of alarm, suspecting he lacked that presence of mind commonly deemed necessary to the role of ambassador—M. de Talleyrand has spoilt the profession—and imagining he might give evidence of wit by talking incessantly. General von Landek had a second means of distinguishing himself: patriotism. For example, he turned crimson with rage whenever he was reminded of Jena. Latterly, upon his return to Königsberg, he had made a detour of over thirty leagues in order to avoid Breslau, a town where a Prussian division had surrendered to some detachments of the French army at the time of Jena.

For this gallant general, legitimate possessor of seven Crosses and two Stars, love of country consisted not in seek-

ing to make Prussia happy and free, but rather in once again avenging the fatal rout aforesaid.

The general's endless stories met with rapid success in Königsberg society. Everyone desired to hear his accounts of Paris. For Königsberg is a city of intellect. Indeed, I should readily declare it the capital of German thought; the French are not loved there, yet if we are honoured by their detestation, on the other hand a sovereign disdain is shown to all other nations of Europe, especially, as I have observed, those whose virtues ally them to those of the Germans.

No one would have listened to a traveller arriving from Vienna or Madrid, whereas the all-too-happy prattler von Landek was plied with questions. The prettiest women, and there are charming ones in that country, sought to discover the location of the Boulevard des Italiens, that center of the world; the way the Tuileries face the Palace of the Louvre; whether the Seine is navigable by sail, like the Vistula; and above all if, in order to pay an evening call upon a lady, one must have received from her, that morning, a little card announcing she will subsequently be at home.

The general, though he talked uninterruptedly, never told a lie: he was a chatterbox in the German fashion. Nor did he seek so much to produce an effect upon his listeners as to give himself the poetic pleasure of eloquently recalling the fine things he had observed during his travels. This custom of never lying for effect preserved his narratives from that monotony so often attributed to our conversationalists, and afforded him a kind of wit.

It was three in the morning; the ball given by the banker Pierre Wanghen, richest man in the city, was congested by an enormous throng; there was no room to dance, yet at least three hundred persons were waltzing at once. The vast hall, illuminated by a thousand candles and embellished

with two hundred little mirrors, presented on all sides the image of good-hearted gaiety. These people were happy, and not uniquely preoccupied, as with us, by the effect they were producing upon others. It is true that the pleasures of music mingled with the lure of dancing: the celebrated Hartberg, first among the world's clarinetists, had consented to play some waltzes. This great artist deigned to lower himself from the sublime heights of the tedious concerto. Pierre Wanghen had virtually promised, upon his daughter Mina's entreaties, to lend him the hundred louis necessary for a journey to Paris, for in the arts one may well have merit elsewhere yet it is only in Paris that one attains glory. This only because it is in Paris that one says, and prints, what one pleases.

Mina Wanghen, Pierre's sole heiress and the prettiest girl in Königsberg even as her father was the town's richest banker, had been asked to dance by eight or ten young men of impeccable appearance—*more germanico,* of course, which is to say with excessively long blond hair and a melting or a terrible gaze. Mina was listening to General von Landek's stories, ignoring the orchestra's little warnings; Hartberg was beginning his second waltz, an enchanting one, but she paid no attention. The young man she had accepted as a partner stood two paces from her, astonished. At last she remembered him, and a tiny gesture warned him not to interrupt; the general was describing the magnificent fountain of Saint-Cloud as it soars skyward, those charming wooded hills of the Seine valley only an hour from the Opéra Comique. Dare we say that it was this last image which caused Mina to forget everything else? In Prussia there are indeed great forests, very lovely and very picturesque, but one league from such forests there is only barbarism, poverty, and a vigilance indispensable if one is

to avoid destruction. All things wretched, coarse, inconsolable—and which produce a love of gilded salons.

A second partner soon appeared, scarlet with happiness; he had watched all the couples pass, Mina was not dancing; something had kept her from taking her first partner's hand; he had some hope of dancing with her, he was intoxicated with delight. Mina informed him in a few absent-minded words that she was tired and would dance no more. At that moment the general was abusing French society, composed of desiccated creatures in whom the ostentation of irony smothers the bliss of enthusiasm and who have dared ridicule the sublime *Werther,* that German masterpiece of the eighteenth century. As he spoke these words, the general tossed his head proudly. "These French," he added, "never escape an irony degrading to any man of honour. Such people are not born to fine sentiments which electrify the soul; for instance, as soon as they mention our Germany they malign her. Any superiority, instead of exalting their souls by sympathy, vexes them by its *intuitive* presence. Why just imagine, among them an officer who is a count by birth cannot place this title before his official signature so long as he is not a colonel! A nation of Jacobins!"

"Then among these bloodthirsty creatures, nothing is held sacred!" exclaimed Mina's second partner, who had taken the liberty of remaining two paces away. The general stared, uncertain whether this profound utterance was not itself tainted with Jacobinism. The young man trembling beside Mina did not flinch under the diplomat's severe gaze. He was in love and believed he had divined her inmost thoughts.

The general, plied with questions about this satanic craze which distinguishes the French, paid the young man no further heed.

"This frivolous people," he continued, "refuses to believe—no doubt impotent to do so—in the sublime sentiments inspiring a heart truly in thrall to melancholy, especially when that heart, with creditable pride, describes such sentiments and in doing so turns luminous!" The general offered a thousand proofs of this lack of a *sixth sense,* as the divine Goethe calls it, among the French. They never see what is sublime. They never relish the comforts of true friendship. "For example," he added, "I could never manage to bind myself to any Frenchman in friendship, I who have spoken so intimately with thousands of persons! There has been but one exception, a certain Count de Claix whose role or whose *individuality,* as they call it, is to excel in the matter of his carriage-horses. I had brought him from Mecklenburg a fine team of café-au-lait stallions with black manes—the count was mad about them. After the last Longchamp, he managed to place an article about them in all the papers. For all his delight, he was perfectly willing to wager them against fifteen hundred louis; and in truth, he won his wager. Yet these same horses he so loved, and in whose stables he would breakfast almost every morning—he might well have lost them!"

Apparently, following this triumph, the Count de Claix had declared himself the intimate friend of General von Landek; as a punishment for which the latter opened his heart concerning Frederick the Great, concerning Rosbach, concerning the eternal Jena.

"But what the devil, my dear General," exclaimed Monsieur de Claix, "if we were *chez vous* after Jena, you were *chez nous* after Waterloo: surely we are even! Let us have no more such ventures. I see but one man among you who would go to war to keep you from printing a *Charivari* in

Berlin. Show your wisdom by refusing to be frightened. Believe me, all patriots who prate of *national honour* are well paid to do so."

The president of the Königsberg Chamber (the prefect of the region), judiciously seated near the general, frowned at this discourse, which it would have been more discreet and diplomatic not to have repeated so distinctly.

"Spoken like a true philosopher!" Mina exclaimed, not realizing that she was thinking aloud.

The fifteen or twenty persons who had formed a circle round the general stared at her. The president of the Chamber was offended, the general himself appeared astonished. Mina was a little abashed, but in a trice she regained her composure and began regarding, with a natural but not at all timid expression, the maidens near her who, much less attractive than she, had uttered protests. Then she asked the general, speaking very slowly, what was the name of this *true philosopher* to whom he had presented such steeds?

"Why, that same Count de Claix, and on my word, he is the one Frenchman with whom I can correspond after ten years' sojourn in Paris. You see what kind of sensibility such people have! My relation with the others has always proceeded *dégringolando,* after the first few days. It is what happens to all of us foreigners . . ."

Mina sacrificed all of Hartberg's waltzes to the delight of putting questions to the general. The latter was enchanted: he was monopolizing the attention of the prettiest girl in Königsberg, one who had the reputation of being very difficult to please. At forty-five, he was triumphing over not only this dancing partner or that, but over the ball itself. The good general went so far as to suppose he was triumphing *individually* over all that fine, smooth-limbed youth. "This is what it means to have lived, to have travelled, and

not to lack a certain aplomb!" he told himself. "A great pity bourgeois blood should flow in the veins of so charming a person!"

Mina was intoxicated with France and did not give the general a thought, finding him every bit as absurd as his Crosses. "Each," she decided, "no doubt gained by some vileness" (it is apparent she was a liberal). The next day, she sent to the great bookseller Denner for the series of Masterpieces of French Literature in two hundred volumes, with gilt edges. She possessed all these works already, but by rereading them in a new edition, they seemed to her to have something new about them. It must be understood that Mina was the favorite pupil of the wittiest man in all Königsberg, Professor and Privy Councillor Eberhart, now imprisoned in a Silesian fortress as a partisan of the government and *off lightly* at that.

It was this singular education for a proper young lady which no doubt caused all her misfortunes. Had she been raised in her country's Sacré-Coeur and in perpetual adoration before the medals conferred upon a worthy diplomat by sovereigns championing *order,* she would doubtless have been very happy, for she was destined to be very rich.

Six weeks after the ball, Pierre Wanghen, who had just turned fifty, died very suddenly, leaving his only daughter two million thalers (nearly seven and a half million francs). Mina's grief exceeded all expression; she worshipped her father, of whom she had been the pride and joy, and whose testamentary arrangements in her behalf revealed a fabulous affection. It must be understood that in Germany the cult of money does not altogether ossify the heart. All of Mina's thoughts were overwhelmed by this cruel event. She had always supposed that her father would be her mainstay and

friend for her entire life. Her mother, still a young and pretty woman, seemed to her almost a sister. What would become of them, weak women exposed to all the snares of men? The considerable fortune (for Königsberg) which suddenly lay so heavily upon them—would it not merely increase the quandaries of an isolated and unprotected life?

This sentiment was the only one which survived Mina's profound despair upon her father's loss. By her melancholy, it was introduced into her heart, of which it took possession without in any way diminishing her grief. Was it not a way of mourning her father?

Several months after Herr Wanghen's death, all the eligible young merchants of northern Germany seemed to have made Königsberg their rendezvous. Most bore letters of recommendation to the House of Wanghen, represented now by Wilhelm Wanghen, Pierre's nephew, and had subsequently been introduced to Mina; all professed the tenderest feelings for this fortunate nephew.

The somewhat excessively marked eagerness of this host of young men, far from flattering Mina's vanity, engaged her in deep and bitter reflections. Her womanly delicacy, as well as her filial grief, were profoundly wounded by the attentions of which she was the object, discreet though they might be. For example, she no longer knew where to venture out of her house for a breath of air. She was obliged to be driven some two leagues from Königsberg and to change the course of her promenade each day if she wished to avoid being greeted by five or six handsome young men in the saddle.

"Is this but an absurd and disagreeable vanity on my part," Mina inquired of her mother with tears in her eyes, upon encountering these young men, "if I suppose that it is

for our sake that these gentlemen ride such distances from Königsberg?"

"Let us not exaggerate, my dear," Frau Wanghen replied, "chance may be the sole cause of such meetings. We shall select the least picturesque, the most tranquil places for our strolls, and only in the last extremity presume that something extraordinary has occurred in our behalf."

But it was in vain that these ladies chose the most desolate stretches of the beach of the Friesches-Haff (an inlet of the sea in the neighbourhood of Königsberg); invariably they were overtaken by dashing cavalcades of young men who had even made a fashion of black, the colour of Mina's mourning. Such gentlemen had come to terms with Madame Wanghen's coachman, who informed them of the hour and the direction of each day's outing.

CHAPTER TWO

MINA ENDED BY MAKING FEWER OUTINGS; she wandered through those magnificent apartments, masterpiece of her father's ostentation, once the rendezvous of the most brilliant society and now so solitary. The splendid mansion built by Pierre Wanghen occupied the northern end of the Friedrichsgasse, the finest street of Königsberg, distinguished in foreign eyes by the great number of little flights of seven or eight steps jutting out into the street and leading to the entrances of the houses. The polished railings of these staircases were of cast iron, produced, I believe, in Berlin and displaying all the curious intricacy of German designs. In their total effect, these elaborate structures are not disagreeable; they have the advantage of novelty and harmonize with the window-ornaments of the principal apartments which, in Königsberg, are always on the ground floor, some four or five feet above street level. The windows are fitted, inside, with sliding sashes covered with a metallic fabric which produces a singular effect. These glistening materials, conveniently for the curiosity of the ladies inside, are impenetrable to passing eyes dazzled by the tiny sparks which

leap from the metallic substance. Gentlemen cannot see into the apartments, while ladies at their needlework near the windows obtain a fine view of whoever passes by.

Such entertainment—of what might be called a sedentary promenade—forms one of the notable features of social life in Prussia. From noon to four, should one choose to ride down the street and cause one's mount to make a little noise, one is certain to find all the pretty women in town doing their needlework quite close to the lower panes of their windows. There is even a style of garment which has a special name and which fashion decrees for appearing behind this pane which, in houses of any pretention, is very transparent indeed.

The ladies' curiosity is assisted by an accessory resource: in every house of distinction, on either side of the ground-floor windows, mirrors about a foot long are attached to a little iron rod and tilted toward the interior. By this means, ladies can see passers-by arriving from the end of the street, while as we have said, no curious eyes can penetrate the metallic screens which shield the bottom half of the windows. But if gentlemen do not see in, they know that they are seen, and this knowledge affords a special immediacy to all the little romances which enliven the society of Berlin and Königsberg. A gentleman is sure to be observed several times each morning by the lady of his choice; indeed, it is not absolutely impossible for the metallic fabric to be occasionally displaced on its frame by a pure effect of chance, permitting the promenader to perceive the lady's pretty hand attempting to put it back. One might go so far as to say that the position of these sashes can have a language all its own. Who could understand it, or be incensed by such a thing if he did?

Hence it was in Königsberg's finest apartment, arranged like all the others in this fashion, that Mina spent time at

her needlework beside her mother and their cousin Madame von Strombeck, a lively young widow who came every day to spend several hours with these ladies.

Sometimes Mina would receive one or another of her intimate friends in the course of the morning. These young ladies informed her, laughing at this new triumph over the terrible race of men, that the young dandies' fashion of wearing black in her honour and as though to sport her colours, had lately acquired a special name and that the close-fitting black frock coats of these gentlemen were known as Friedrichsgasse jackets, from the name of the street through which their wearers rode to exhibit them.

This circumstance, which should never have reached her ears, was taken by Mina in very bad part.

Madame Wanghen noticed that for some time Mina, contrary to the habits of all the ladies of Königsberg, never looked out at the passers-by through the little metal blinds. And on this she chided her daughter.

The most perfect atmosphere of equality prevailed between this daughter and her still-young mother. Such a custom would seem to us anything but suitable in France, yet Mina had no better friend than her mother; but also, since her earliest childhood, she was in the habit of spending her time at home absolutely as she pleased. In the German states, a young lady loses her freedom when she marries.

Madame Wanghen, seeing that Mina offered no specific explanation as to her sudden repugnance for the magnificent view over the Friedrichsgasse and beyond to the splendid English garden known as the Amalienruhe, made no further mention of the matter.

But one day, around three in the afternoon, in order to enjoy the fine winter sunlight, when everything fair and fine among the youth of Königsberg was parading up and down the Friedrichsgasse in a carefully arranged simplicity

which harmonizes so nicely with the German toilette, Mina gave way to a fit of petulance. "Mother," she said all of a sudden, "would you like to come and sew in the little blue salon?"

"But my dear, the blue salon is pleasant only after dark—it overlooks the courtyard, and there is nothing so melancholy on a winter day! Would you abandon this fine spring sunshine to take up our work in that grotto? You used to be so fond of this room a year ago, when your father had it arranged according to the plans of our poor prisoner, Councillor Eberhart."

Mina blushed, and made no answer.

"I wager," said her mother, after a moment's silence, "that you are vexed with one of those handsome young fellows squeezed into his frock coat, who pass back and forth under our windows and even seem to me to raise their voices when they reach the granite paving in front of the house. Several of them, if I mistake not, danced with you at the last ball we gave before our misfortunes. Has one of them misbehaved since that fine evening?"

I see that the reader is scandalized, but to my great peril, I run the risk of telling the truth; yes, there are countries where one has the misfortune of not behaving precisely as we do in France. Yes, there are countries where a mother, quite certain moreover of her daughter's discretion, jests with her concerning the man that daughter might choose for a husband. Moreover, shockingly enough, almost all marriages there are made for love. And for years on end, these young ladies converse in some corner of the salon (not two steps away from their mother) with the man who seeks their hand. And should that young man cease paying his visits, he would be completely dishonoured. Moreover this interval is perhaps the most agreeable time in the lives of both young people.

One terrible consequence of this honest freedom is that very often a rich young man will marry a poor girl on the absurd pretext that she is lovely and that he is madly in love with her, which casts a notable shadow upon the respectable class of sullen young ladies possessing neither wit nor beauty. Whereas in France the basis of our unwritten legislation relative to marriage is to protect all rich and ugly young women. To put matters philosophically, were it not for the damage done to the notaries responsible among us for forming the conjugal links among rich people who have never set eyes upon each other, I should in fact prefer these two or three years of rather inane happiness and charming illusions which his country's customs afford a German youth. He encounters such happiness precisely at that sullen moment in our practices when necessity's terrible voice is raised for the first time. One must *assume status,* says that voice, and the poor young fellow goes off to clerk in some dim office in order to acquire, some day or other, just such a status. The young German, on his way to that dim office, passes twice a day beneath the metal-shaded windows of the girl he loves, who is sewing at her mother's side. He considers himself utterly happy if she permits him to take her street three times instead of twice, and if she learns something to his discredit she knows very well that at their next meeting she can request him to select some other street than hers by which to reach his place of business.

Sometimes, too, the young people converse under their parents' very eyes, sitting at the end of one of those green-painted tables which embellish Der Grüne Jager, the English garden situated a quarter of a league outside Königsberg, famous for its old elms and once a part of the ancient Abbey of Quedlimburg.

It is here that, two or three times in the week, around five o'clock of a summer evening, all the young ladies of the

town meet for café-au-lait in the open air. There is always some troupe of gypsy musicians there who sound their horns a little way off, hidden under great elms coeval with the last Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order. The little silver cup passed by the young woman who plays the harp in the troupe would not receive a single *gutegroschen* if these Bohemians had the impertinence to play music of their own composition. It is always pieces by Beethoven, by Weber, by Mozart, and still earlier masters such as Bach and Handel, that they perform.

Hearts made for music and for love delight in these harmonies of the horn played at a somewhat languorous tempo. Nor are the hardest hearts—miserly merchants, old judges attached to the Court, journalists who praise the Russian alliance—overly shocked: such music is remote enough so that, in absolute terms, one cannot listen if one is not disposed to enjoy it; in a word, such sweet and melancholy music has nothing of the effrontery of a French chanteuse installing herself beside a piano and accompanied by a man in yellow gloves.

But the reader will be asking, is this a guide to Germany or a mere tale you are proposing? Perhaps neither one nor the other; it is possible that what we have here is nothing less than a treatise of transcendental metaphysics according to the principles of the illustrious Schelling, which out of fear of our French irony we shall set forth in a learned and yet charming dialogue which will take place at the Der Grüne Jager between the tale's heroine, Mina Wanghen, and one of those young fellows squeezed into his frock coat so prettily embellished by black velvet lapels. When it becomes too learned, the dialogue will take place between Mina Wanghen and her illustrious teacher Professor and Councillor Eberhart, now confined for his own good in Schweidnitz, one of the finest fortresses in all Silesia.

For the moment, however, the dialogue will take place solely between Mina Wanghen and her mother, and we have not yet reached the sublime portions of our book.

Mina blushed at the parental observation and then flung herself upon her mother's neck and dissolved into tears.

"Well now," said Madame Wanghen smiling, "so my poor Mina has lost the fine nickname, *Finicky Minicky,* that her young friends in Königsberg had bestowed upon her, and I cannot say I am sorry for it. Your poor father so longed to find you a match before your twentieth!"

But when Mina failed to smile, Madame Wanghen added more seriously: "Loved but loved no longer? Or rather, have you alarmed him by one of those singular notions which (thank Heaven!) you conceive so frequently, and now he loves you a little less?"

"You will laugh at me, darling mamma, and call me odder still, which is why I almost dare not speak, but these young men horrify me."

"Horrify indeed!" exclaimed Madame Wanghen with a laugh. "You mean that one of them has angered you—perhaps he has a friend who has given him unfortunate advice?"

"I am ashamed to tell you what I think," Mina said, emboldened to break the ice of this strange subject at last. "No, dear mamma, it is all these young men, taken together, who horrify me: I have every reason to believe—from their faces, and from their little bouquets made of the lilacs which my girlfriends have told them are my favourite colour, and from a thousand other things—that they come to parade here under our windows precisely on my account. Mother dearest, would you make me the happiest girl in the world?"

"What is it, my daughter?" exclaimed Madame Wanghen, a little alarmed by the extreme gravity with which this question had been asked.

"Oh, let us persuade my cousin Wilhelm to let it be known that we are utterly ruined."

"What are you saying, my dear?" asked Madame Wanghen, supposing she had misunderstood.

"I am saying that all these young men gathered here with the base motive of gaining the millions of my dowry, and to that end affecting all the appearances of a tender sentiment, truly horrify me. Not one of them bothers to be jealous of his neighbour, and who knows? perhaps when I happen to look out into the street, as I used to do, the one my eyes happen to fall upon boasts of it to his friends and on that day passes for the favourite."

"Ah, there we have it at last. One day you singled out a certain young man who has responded to such felicity by no more than indifference? The monster!"

"Indifference! I shall never be indifferent to any of them," said Mina with the calm gaze of naïveté. "Each of them *disgusts* me more than the next. Is it not true that for a month now a surprising number of young merchants from all over northern Germany have collected in Königsberg, and that they have all presented themselves to Wilhelm? General von Landek has apprised me of the fact."

"It is because, my dear, with or without vanity, our house passes for the first in Königsberg."

"Well, this congregation of young men horrifies me, though I cannot account to you for the nature and the degree of my horror, and that is why, these eight or ten days, I have kept such a sentiment from you. Ever since, I have been led to melancholy reflections upon the future, which only embitter the loss we have endured. Were he alive, my father would give me only a modest dowry, I am certain; I would not be a famous heiress. As it is, mamma," said Mina, blushing deeply once again, "I can never, like any of my friends, flatter myself that I have inspired a tender senti-

ment . . . And so you would make me infinitely happy, don't you see, if you would permit it to be known that we are ruined."

"My daughter, religion forbids so deep a falsehood," replied Madame Wanghen in a very grave tone of voice.

"But mamma, whom does this falsehood harm?"

"The moment we permit ourselves a wicked action by justifying its motive, there is no reason to stop, and thus we arrive at the most dreadful deeds."

"Mamma," said Mina, quite as gravely, "my whole life's happiness is attached to this falsehood. Because of *these millions,* I can never believe I am loved. So I am more wretched than if I were a hunchback: at least a poor girl with such a defect can hope that her good character and her patience will touch someone, but I am marked by destiny with this fatal seal, and can never believe I am the object of a genuine preference," etc. etc.

Madame Wanghen seemed utterly astonished. Wilhelm Wanghen, the present head of the house, came to see the ladies that evening, as was his habit. Mina asked to speak to him for a moment, and stepped into an adjoining room. Here she proposed that he let it be known she was utterly ruined.

At first the prudent banker did not understand, and when he did he was quite scandalized. "A folly! a folly!" he exclaimed over and over during Mina's appeal. "What is this, my dear cousin!" he cried, when at last Mina gave him a chance to speak, "would you let the word *ruin* be coupled with the hitherto untainted name of Wanghen? Could you so far fail in your duty, permit me to remind you, to your worthy father?"

Wilhelm concluded by refusing absolutely.

"Well, in that case," Mina said in a fury, "will your so-called gratitude to your benefactor enable you to betray his

daughter? If my own mother, out of pure kindness for me, would allow me to let us pass for ruined, would you betray us? Answer me, Wilhelm!"

The merchant, somewhat moved by this expression *so-called gratitude,* requested twenty-four hours to ponder so strange a proposal.

"Ask me, cousin, for a quarter of all I have—it is not considerable, what I have, but I should rather give it to you. Then you will see whether I deserve such a cruel reproach: *so-called gratitude* to the family of Pierre Wanghen."

That evening, and it was the first such occasion in their lives, there was a coldness between mother and daughter. Mina asked permission to retire early. Madame Wanghen dined alone, deeply distressed, and wrote to Wilhelm requesting that he come to see her the next morning at six o'clock, before Mina had arisen.

These two good German hearts outdid each other in deploring the girl's folly. Wilhelm readily proved to Madame Wanghen that, even if it were to their interest to permit such an imposture, the thing was impossible to execute. How could a fortune of over two and a half million thalers be made to vanish! And supposing some plausible fable could be devised, would not justice find a legal means to seek examination of the evidence? What! only a few months after the death of the famous banker Pierre Wanghen, known throughout all Germany, his only daughter, still a minor, was reduced to penury or at least to an ordinary pittance!

"But my dear and respected lady," exclaimed the nephew, "I am insulting your reason no less than your conscience in discussing so mad a plan even for a moment! Just think, we are dealing here with the estate of a minor! Impossible, impossible, and above all, criminal!"

It had never occurred to Madame Wanghen that she was

in any way superior to her daughter. I believe that, driven to extremities and upon great occasions, she might have tried to enforce her position as a mother, but what prevailed over all else was the impassioned friendship she felt for her daughter, a sentiment necessary to her very life! Her refusal of the preceding day had kept her from closing her eyes, and she had spent the night trying to find some legitimate means of satisfying Mina's strange resolve. "After all," she told herself, "wealth or poverty is but a secondary condition of life. Suppose my husband had been ruined in the last years of his life and had left us with an income of a thousand thalers, would I love my daughter any less? Would we be any less fond of one another, any less in accord?"

But Pierre Wanghen's nephew was quite insensitive to such reasoning and saw nothing but pure folly in it. Madame Wanghen, realizing that time was passing swiftly, ended by saying to her nephew: "Go, dear nephew, go to the celebrated lawyer Willibald, request him to come to me forthwith for a consultation, obtain his word of honour that he will never discuss with anyone in the world the question which will be put before him. I shall have him dine with my poor Mina this very day. I cannot remain on bad terms with her. From his place in Heaven, may her father forgive me! I should die happy if I could prove to Mina that even were I to consent, the thing is physically impossible."

"I shall speak to the lawyer."

"Take every precaution, dear friend, to say nothing, I beg you, which might suggest he would oblige me by giving one answer rather than another. First of all, I am averse to such means, and then Mina would read in his eyes that he had been forewarned, and instead of shifting the odious nature of the thing to material impossibility, I should be burdened with an even greater responsibility for it myself. Imagine,

that I should have suborned a lawyer summoned for a consultation!"

"You are entirely right, Mina would divine everything we had done. You know what I think? I shall tell you. She is too intelligent by half. And it was a mistake on my excellent uncle's part to hire that wild man Eberhart as her tutor in history. And another mistake, complementary to the first, to promise that devil of a metaphysician a life-interest of a thousand thalers if Mina, by the age of sixteen, achieved a reputation as a girl of wit and intellect in Königsberg. Well, she enjoys just such a reputation; she is more often noted for her wit than for her beauty, and you see what comes of it. What has all her intellect done for her true happiness? As if being the loveliest girl in the city were not already enough! As I see it, such an advantage, carried to this extreme, is anything but desirable."

Lawyer Willibald arrived in his black garb and his finest fettle at nine in the morning. Those who encountered him in the street had no doubt that he had been summoned by His Excellency the President of the Chamber.

Mina was admirable in the discussion with lawyer Willibald. Arguing with her mother, respect had veiled the energy of her remarks. The lawyer had the imprudence not to confine himself to the material impossibility of the thing; fond of exaggeration, like all lawyers the world over, he made the mistake of claiming that the project in question was an illegitimate one.

"And whom can it harm?" Mina asked.

"You, Mademoiselle."

"And am I not the judge of what suits my own happiness?"

"But, Mademoiselle, the laws have never mentioned such an action!"

"And what are the laws to me? Moreover, according to

your own maxims, everything they do not prohibit is permitted."

The argument was a warm one. The more deeply the lawyer embroiled himself, the longer grew his replies. Willibald ended by withdrawing on the excuse that the courier from Berlin required his presence. "Do you realize, Mademoiselle, that you are virtually stripping me of the means to speak—I who have spoken before the bar some twenty-seven years and with some success! Well, take your entire fortune, in diamonds or in banknotes, sail out to sea, and there, in the presence of witnesses, fling the whole of it into the water. Your name will echo in every newspaper of Europe. In every country, men will say to you what an Athenian wit once said to Diogenes: 'Diogenes, through the holes of your cloak, I perceive your vanity!' You shall be seen as the loveliest but the most conceited person in Europe. And such conceit is a miserable failing. Fancy requiring the consent of others in order to know one is happy! . . ."

And the lawyer continued for a long while.

"Well! What would you say, Herr Willibald, to the possibility of changing both my name and my condition: Mademoiselle Smith, with an income of a thousand thalers?"

"But one word. Any pretty young woman who changes her name is supposed—Madame will permit me to speak as a jurist," said the lawyer, with a bow to Madame Wanghen "—is supposed to have had the misfortune of becoming a mother before being a bride. Therefore you should, by means of some chemical substance (silver nitrate, I believe), spread a great red stain over your face, in simulation of a cutaneous affection. Even so, Mademoiselle, unfortunately there is such pliability in your figure, and such youth in your gait, that if one of our young German merchants

were to encounter you in Naples, or in Paris, or in New York—and where do our young Germans fail to make their way?—he would end by recognizing Mademoiselle Wanghen."

The clock was striking four. The lawyer was pale with fatigue. Madame Wanghen took him aside, paid him well, and implored his secrecy. Which lawyer Willibald promised with dignity, and kept his promise.

"Well, daughter?" asked Madame Wanghen, returning to the salon.

"Well, mamma, I shall be deeply unhappy, but I have acquired what I believed impossible: new reasons to love you," and she flung herself into her mother's arms.

These ladies then had an unconstrained conversation concerning Mina's plans—a rare thing, I believe, in even the most united families, though quite frequent in Germany: by an effect of sympathy, each of these two beings found her own true happiness in the other's.

"But mamma," Mina said one day to her mother, "will you permit me to spend three months in Paris in a sort of *incognito?* I should be rid of the sight of all these fine young Germans which, I confess, has become intolerable to me. In Paris, we should spend only as little as need be, and . . ."

"We shall leave whenever you like, my darling, and I shall take upon myself whatever seems singular in this resolve . . . I shall have myself ordered to take Pilnitz waters in Bohemia, where our king goes every year. Ah! My dear Mina, how happy I am to do something that will please you!"

CHAPTER THREE

ONE DAY WHEN MADAME WANGHEN WAS TAKING tea with her nephew Wilhelm, his house being the only one these ladies' mourning allowed them to visit, she observed that her health would oblige her to take the waters at Cheltenham, in England. Nor was this resolution greeted with surprise: Pierre Wanghen had been about to journey to England with his wife and daughter when he had been prematurely carried off.

Madame Wanghen added that after a sojourn of several months in that country, she planned to return to Königsberg, perhaps passing through Paris on the way.

The young beaux and General von Landek seemed flabbergasted by this remark, which had all the air of an official declaration. Two of the boldest dared say that they too would be travelling to England to attend the races and buy horses.

A few days later, Mina and her mother set out for London, but having reached Hamburg, they found that so long a journey by sea was *impossible,* and resolutely took the post chaise for Calais, which is to say, for Paris.

The banker in Hamburg who was the correspondent of

the House of Wanghen had the highest regard for Pierre Wanghen's widow and even more for a daughter whose dowry amounted to seven millions. Finding the Wanghen ladies determined to spend three months in Paris, he obtained for them excellent letters of recommendation in that city. The Chargé d'Affaires de France in Berlin, a close associate of the Hamburg banker, recommended them to his own family, and even to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In order to begin on a good basis with the Bank of Paris, Madame Wanghen purchased a credit of 100,000 francs a month. She was the gayest, best-hearted of German women, but she knew the art of making herself welcome.

"So we are really going to see *la belle France,* mamma!" Mina exclaimed, intoxicated with delight. "In Paris, we shall be like everyone else—here in Prussia we shall never be anything but inferior beings: a merchant's wife and daughter!"

"But Mina dear, you are slandering your own country," Madame Wanghen answered. "You know perfectly well that Count von Landek is utterly in love with you, and that another count from Berlin, quite rich and quite young as well, has made us the most honourable overtures."

"Yes, that young count who wants to become a minister! I should have to hear my husband complain that his lofty ambitions had reduced him to marrying a little bourgeoise. I should have to blush every other moment, and I don't know whether my future husband would not undertake to marry you off as well, mamma dear, to some nobleman or other, in order not to hear the simple name of Wanghen constantly repeated by his lackeys whenever we walked into his salons. Such a notion might make me a naughty woman —I should find a rival in my own husband—but indubitably it would make me an unhappy one, and therefore you as well, mamma."

"I have no such illusions, my dear, I concern myself only with real positions; moreover, I am quite accustomed to being no more than a wealthy bourgeoise, and for ten years when your father was at the start of his career, I was indeed no more than quite simply a bourgeoise."

"In those days, war had not been declared between the nobility and the *tiers état.*"

"What an absurd expression," exclaimed Madame Wanghen, "the *tiers état!* Soon you'll be forgetting your own good German. The general's stories have bewitched you."

"It is a weakness, I confess, but I am shocked at the way our Prussians talk. When I speak French, it seems to me that I am escaping the weight of this German world which is smothering me. The general's stories have made me think that in Paris a young woman who knows three or four languages and who can offer her husband as many millions is inferior to no one."

"Admit, too, that our poor Councillor Eberhart has somewhat prejudiced you in favor of France."

"For forty years the French have thought and acted for all the nations of Europe! The hatred they have been shown would in and of itself prove their superiority. Let us go and observe this great people on their home ground."

"How pretty you are, Mina dear—our departure will make every marriageable girl in eastern Prussia happy: you are clever, you are learned, you have five millions of ready money and two more at my disposal; but your turn of mind terrifies me, and what adds the finishing touch to my fears is that I shall never have the courage to deny you a thing! For instance, this notion of transplanting ourselves to Paris without telling anyone! And we shall arrive in a city where we don't know a living soul! What is to become of us?"

Mina triumphed in her answer to this objection. The publisher of her series of masterpieces of the French language,

either in order to avoid paying royalties or for some other reason, included in these collections only the works of authors long since dead. And Mina had composed a charming image of French society for herself. Marivaux's comedies, especially, seemed to her grace incarnate. Surely they represented France *au naturel.* Above all, there were none of those coarse and overly rational merchants who stocked the German *dramatis personae.*

"What will people say of us?" continued Madame Wanghen.

"First of all, what can they find to say of us? Who will be so concerned with us as to say anything at all? In that happy city, we shall live free as air."

"And that is just what I fear. Seeing you free as air . . . You will be more singular than ever."

"Has not the general told us that we can hope to succeed, among these attractive French people, only to the degree that we manage to surprise them a little? And to arouse these ironic imaginations, must not a foreigner be a bit different from what they expect to find? Of course, as I promised you, I shall seek to conceal whatever may be 'singular,' as you say, in my way of thinking; but first of all, what we are calling *singular* must be quite natural in that country, and then, if despite myself something is noticed, that will be a distinction, mamma, and not a disadvantage."

"Then why reject the very first of these distinctions? You know General von Landek told us several times that as soon as a Frenchman becomes rich he adopts a second name, one less commonplace than the first. Why not be Mademoiselle Wanghen de Diepholtz? You know that Diepholtz is the finest estate in all of eastern Prussia: it brings in forty thousand thalers a year, and your father bought it in your name eighteen years ago, on the day of your baptism!"

"Yes, mamma, but the day will come in Paris when some good Prussian merchant will say that no one in Königsberg ever heard of Mademoiselle de Diepholtz, and you see, if I had to be afraid of blushing over something like that, I think I should never speak a word. I find the privileges of nobility quite irrelevant. I am leaving my own country where these privileges offend me, and it would be an acknowledgment of their mastery if I were to profit by a change of country in order to give my name the appearances of such nobility. We shall arrive in a city where only one district, I understand, the Faubourg Saint-Germain, concerns itself with the lack of noble birth. Well, mamma, we shall not live in that *quartier.* It is my intention to be the equal of everyone around me."

"Will you have the courage to promise that it is not your intention to be superior?" replied Madame Wanghen, laughing.

Such were the remarks exchanged by Mina and her mother during their swift journey to Paris.

Madame Wanghen, not yet forty-six years old, still retained many of the aspects of youth; in all her life she had never wished harm to anyone, as a consequence of which her kindly expression tended to conceal her native wit. Of this she had plenty, however, and in particular a perfect rectitude which distinctly revealed to her the motives of others' actions.

In her distress at arriving without acquaintance in Paris, she had included in her suite six devoted servants and an extensive silver service.

For all her arguments, Madame Wanghen herself was beginning to grow used to the agreeable notion of sojourning in a country where, at church, at the play, in public places, she would not have to endure official insolence of any sort.

"It is because that revolution everyone so passionately longs for among us," Mina was saying, "has already oc-

curred in France. In Königsberg, the moment you walk into a salon, how often have you not been compelled to withdraw at once and to make a respectful curtsey to some noble lady who appeared at the door of that salon at the same moment? Neither you nor I can be in a salon where there is a Highness; if one should appear, we must vanish on the spot."

"But are there not many Highnesses in Paris?" asked poor Madame Wanghen.

At last they caught sight of this longed-for Paris of theirs; they reached it on a lovely April evening. After passing through the tollgates, their carriage took them at once to the door of their banker, Monsieur the Baron de Vintimille. A clerk was waiting for them, and led these ladies to one of the finest houses in the Rue de Rivoli, where the most expensive apartment had been engaged for them.

Mina was enchanted by the aspect of the Tuileries, with their burgeoning greenery. She determined at once to go for a stroll beneath those magnificent trees, among those statues, masterpieces of the greatest artists. It was evident that she was seeing everything in its finest light—she was eighteen years old and enjoying the delightful pleasure of having her own way.

"But are you sure you are not tired?" inquired Madame Wanghen.

Mina took her hat.

"Now that hat, which was so fashionable in Hamburg, may be only singular in Paris—they make fun of everything here."

"It is precisely because of their mockery that I love these dear Parisians; in Königsberg our cold reason would pay no attention to a foreign girl's hat!"

As they laughed over the hat, Monsieur the Baron de

Vintimille came to inquire if the ladies might be seen. The ladies were determined not to be tired—there is a naturalness and a charming bonhomie in Germany and in Italy of which we know nothing in France. Thus the baron was shown in; he was a rather handsome fellow of fifty, perhaps fifty-five, with an elegant figure, large features, but nothing of the coarse and anxious countenance of a man who counts his change. He was very well dressed, without affectation. Yet after a few moments, Madame Wanghen found that there was something uneasy, even a little mad in his eyes. He spoke readily and well. Mina overwhelmed him with questions, to which he responded with pleasure.

Madame Wanghen asked him for three or four servants of respectable appearance, trustworthy and quiet people, and he assured her he would find them for her.

Such was this banker whose eagerness to oblige doubtless surprises you. First of all, he was a German; formerly he had been a Protestant in religion, and was named Isaac Wentig; now he called himself Baron de Vintimille and had every right to do so. The King of ——, whose last loan he had just made possible, had delivered to him, through his ambassador in Paris, a letter patent, signed, countersigned, sealed, perfectly in order, and leaving blank only the title conferred by His Majesty upon the fortunate banker. A scholar dining with Monsieur Isaac Wentig told him that the House of Vintimille was now defunct, and that moreover it was better to assume a title somewhat foreign to France.

"Well then! a house that is just starting must be modest about it," said the banker. "I shall be no more than a baron. And he requested the ambassador to write in his own hand on the royal parchment the simple title of Baron de Vintimille.

The new baron said to the ambassador, as he accompanied him to the door: "Your Excellency will not be surprised if for the next year, as of this day, the House of Vintimille takes no commission on funds drawn or deposited by you."

I see that the reader who knows something of life finds this action quite anomalous. What is the use of paying out good money for an achieved benefit which one can then neither revoke nor augment? But the new baron had been a moneyman in name only, he had nearly as much vanity as a Frenchman, hence he was only in the fifth or sixth rank with regard to millions. But no man was happier to be a baron, and, as a true German, believing he would be approved by the barons who were his new colleagues, eight days after his elevation to the *equestrian* order, as he called it, he abjured Protestantism, as did the baroness, their daughters, and two or three cousins working in the bank, and from a rather chilly Protestant became an excellent Catholic. He realized of course that such an action would considerably diminish his credit among his former coreligionists. But he had several millions, he intended to buy lands, build a chateau, make new acquaintances, and ultimately withdraw from the world of commerce and become a peer of France. The fact is that he had been personally stung by the immense superiority which the celebrated N——, the reigning banker of the times, affected over all his confreres.

Baron de Vintimille was almost a moneyman no longer, hence we shall not be surprised by his delicate undertakings with the Wanghen ladies; in truth he sought to make Paris agreeable to them.

"I advise you, ladies, never to have more than fifty louis in your desk. I shall do for you what I do for no one, I shall pay your expenses, which you will inform me of by a little note in your own hand. I shall send you a certain blue-tinted

paper which I have made in London for the use of my house, it cannot be imitated in Paris. On this paper, write your expenses. By this very simple means, never having money at home, you will be preserved from thefts of any seriousness. As for minor vexations, this obliging populace will rid you of two hundred francs a month in twenty-sou pieces. But ladies, if you will be so good as to believe me, never be vexed by such trifles. Allow for such a sum in your budget—French underlings rob you with perfect grace and a charming respect, really quite suitable. Such people are in fact suitable in their behavior with people like ourselves only when they are robbing us."

"But Monsieur, is there an opera this evening?" Mina asked.

"It is Friday, no doubt the French opera . . ."

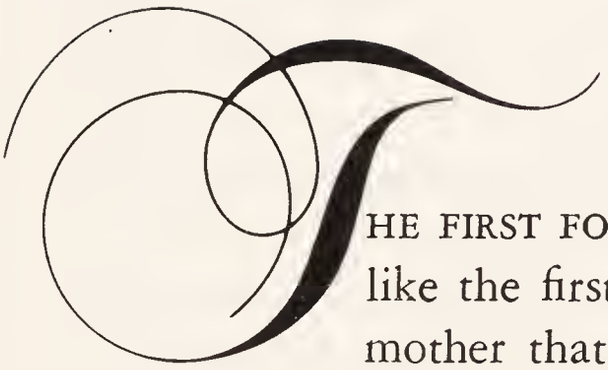
"What, you wish to go to the Opera?" exclaimed Madame Wanghen.

"If you will permit it, that would be my greatest pleasure, mamma. Monsieur the Baron, who has a truly fraternal kindness for these poor foreign ladies who are just beginning . . . will have the further kindness to send someone to take a box . . ."

All of which was done. The baron found Mina's childishness delightful: "What spirit she has," he said. "She's never silly, and always so close to being so!" For he did not doubt for a moment that all this amiability was a kind of play-acting.

She must have been tired indeed that evening, and the baron triumphed in the finesse of his conjectures when he saw Mina sound asleep in her admiration of the third scene of *La Juive.*

CHAPTER FOUR



THE FIRST FORTNIGHT IN PARIS WAS EXACTLY like the first evening; Mina declared to her mother that she could spend her life there. Madame Wanghen was not entirely of the same opinion—hers was not a vivacious mind—but she had a remarkable sagacity, saw matters from all sides, and it would have been difficult to keep anything from her.

Mina was mad about the Théâtre-Français, and could not imagine why there was not a crowded house every evening. Baron de Vintimille began to be less sure of his admiration for the young *Miss,* as he called her. He found great faults in the playacting, agreeable as it was, that she indulged in so readily.

"She will never produce quite the effect she intends," he observed astutely to his wife.

"I have never shared your enthusiasm," the baroness replied. "Her behavior is not properly conceived, she has a bizarre mind. What is this craze for never dressing in quite the style suitable for a person of such means? She is beneath the position to which heaven has called her. I suppose she

has come here with the intention of marrying some French duke. Well, what self-respecting young man would be attracted by that eternal negligence in her clothes and those endless and exhausting junkets?"

"The ladies said nothing to our friend Bonnevin the notary, whom I introduced to them for just that purpose. He had a good dose of them on the journey to Chantilly, which lasted two long days. Since the ladies were going there, he imagined there was some important business in the vicinity. He did everything he could think of to raise the subject of marriage. The ladies spoke to him of nothing but the Great Condé."

"But were their letters from Königsberg always in that same style?"

"Always. Not one spelling error in the communications of either mother or daughter. The fortune is even more considerable than they acknowledge, and there is no young man of their country who would not be enchanted to be singled out by Mademoiselle Wanghen."

"Then she must be in love with some inferior she cannot marry."

"Possibly. There must be some explanation for her behavior, but to tell you the truth, I cannot imagine what it could be."

"Have they refused our invitation to dinner next Tuesday?"

"No indeed. Madame Wanghen was delighted to accept."

"We shall see how the proud Mina will be dressed."

Reluctant to compromise the acuteness of his social perception, the baron did not invite the Wanghen ladies to meet his new friends in high society. He realized that he would have to explain Mina to them, and he regarded as too simple, as virtually absurd, the one account which he could

have made and which so exasperated the baroness: "She is what she seems: gay, learned, and mad about Paris."

The dinner to which he *had* invited them was no more than a dinner of wealthy persons. Most had been born poor, some no more than simple working people, but as Monsieur de Vintimille would say, it was all the same a dinner of twenty millions. As for the insignificant guests, *i.e.,* those not to be counted in the millions, there was the baron's nephew, a squadron leader in a lancers regiment, a division head at the Ministry of the Interior, and an obscure writer who in this capacity sought to enter the Académie Française. When Monsieur de Vintimille heard the Wanghen ladies' carriage, he reminded his guests that he was about to have the honor of presenting to them a dowry of seven millions and a lovely face, and he hurried to receive the ladies at the top of his stairs.

"Tell me the names, and be so kind as to add a little description," said Mina, "so that I can understand something of the conversation."

"The stout man in glasses with smooth hair who will be on the baroness's right rejected a ministry six weeks ago, he is a deputy, a wealthy manufacturer, and one of these days will be a minister. There will be a man whose countenance gives every sign of wit on Madame de Vintimille's left. Unfortunately that countenance is illusory. He cannot say a thing worth listening to, he makes investments which are undistinguished but rewarding, and I should estimate him at three millions. Beside you, my ladies, I shall place Monsieur de Derneville, a celebrated writer, who on most occasions is very talkative; but there is an empty chair at the Academy, he will fear compromising himself by epigrams on well-known persons, and will probably not utter a word. He is wearing a splendid diamond in his jabot. You will notice,

my ladies, a man who as well as the most absurdly tiny nose has blue eyes equally remarkable for their enormous size. He was once an ordinary workman for Richard Lenoir, twenty years back. Today he has four millions, he is the wealthiest manufacturer of . . . of his kind. He is a man in the front rank."

"Introduce me to him first of all," Mina said, "I should like him to know me. He is a man like my father."

"What affectation!" thought the baron, "her father was never an ordinary workman!"

"But I am keeping you, ladies."

"Please, a few words more," Mina pleaded.

"Well, there is a gentleman of very good standing, who has several medals and never speaks a word—that is General de Varces, who has a very fine piece of property up for sale. Another gentleman who also has five or six medals, but who speaks incessantly, is Monsieur Rotal, one of the most zealous captains of the Garde Nationale de Paris; he is a manufacturer of . . . The government protects all his undertakings, and he is on the way to doubling his present fortune, which indeed amounts to some two millions. You will be sure to notice, Mademoiselle, the countenance of a youngish man with a round head and extremely black hair. He is a remarkably vain creature, a fine speaker who loves to hear himself talk and who appears to be saying to any wretch subjected to his inanities: 'How fortunate you are, my dear fellow, to be in the society of a man of my sort.' This gentleman is no one less than Baron Faneau, former *chargé d'affaires* or ambassador to some minor German court. He has three millions, but he is in despair at no longer having his position. He was too deceitful, so they say, even for a diplomat. He was released from his duties as one who had spoiled the profession. Now he is flinging himself into in-

dustry, and has bought stock in all the most promising enterprises. He tells us all the news, and knows everything that is happening, or everything that is being talked about in the ministries. I was forgetting Monsieur Pomar, who is the wealthiest landowner in Burgundy—he pays fifty-four thousand francs in taxes. Every Sunday he goes to Mass with his mother, he borrows two sous from her to pay for his chair in church, and I am certain he never pays them back. To speak frankly, this man is a vile person, and wears his character in his countenance. We do a good deal of business together. One day I told him, about two years ago, that I wanted to buy a certain stretch of woods near Paray; he knew nothing about this transaction which was advantageous in itself and likely to be even more so to me because I have an iron foundry nearby—well, he posted off there that very night, and bought the woods right out from under my nose."

"Goodness! and you continue to see such a man?" Mina asked.

"Certainly. I was the fool for having mentioned the matter. I gave him *hat money* amounting to twenty thousand francs, and he gave me back my woods."

The reader may have found this list somewhat extensive. Mina, contrary to the reader, was entertained by it, and her questions more than once delayed the Baron de Vintimille, who wanted to give his arm to Madame Wanghen and enter the salon. They were ultimately received there with incessant compliments by Madame and Mesdemoiselles Vintimille.

Soon dinner was announced. The wealthy carpet manufacturer, a future minister, gave his arm to Mina, who found him quite intelligent of aspect.

The guests sat down at table. Forthwith the general conversation began with a rapid and warmly argued discussion as to the political character of the celebrated Monsieur

N—— who, the day before, had addressed the Chamber with enormous success. The captain of the Garde Nationale praised the former minister to the skies.

"You may talk of his eloquence, but not of the firmness of his political belief."

To which the captain made an impassioned reply.

"We cannot agree," Monsieur Pomar shouted at him. "You talk like a man with business to do; as for me, I deal with the government only insofar as I pay taxes."

Mina found that the conversation proceeded in a dreadfully coarse fashion. She had never heard anything of the kind in Marivaux's comedies. Soon things of a much harsher nature were being said, it appeared these gentlemen were certain they could never offend each other; and the faces were even worse than the words. The squadron leader in the lancers, the baron's nephew, observed to Madame Wanghen beside him: "This is getting too warm, these gentlemen are forgetting the presence of our lovely visitors from abroad—I must say some nonsense, for which I ask your forgiveness."

He then told a story which began well and abruptly concluded on a pun which was a coarse jest. Whereupon all the guests, speaking at once, declared that the pun was the lowest form of humor. Each in turn related, quite eagerly, the worst of the new puns he could hope to ask his neighbour to hear. Mina noticed that two or three puns, which in fact no one knew, led to a moment of complete silence: the company was occupied in figuring them out with an evident anxiety.

The master of the house was reluctant to have politics discussed before the wealthy manufacturer, a future minister whom such a conversation could not gratify for that very reason. He interrupted a political beginning by asking

the captain of the National Guard, who had just arrived from Le Havre, how that city was dealing with the commercial crisis in America.

"They're selling everything off at ruinous prices to save cotton."

"But it's Paris that will suffer."

"Have you heard that Wolf, Tiger and Company has declared it will accept no American paper as of yesterday, Monday?"

At this moment six persons were speaking at once. One must do these gentlemen the justice of remarking that they did not shout, but each one spoke with tremendous emphasis, making it clear that he was quite sure of what he was saying. This manner of arguing lasted a good ten minutes. Mina frowned.

"Does it alarm you?" Madame Wanghen murmured to her in German.

"Well, I've never seen such coarse creatures."

"And the funny thing," said Madame Wanghen, "is that we Germans are the ones they are always accusing of coarseness. Did you ever hear men talking to each other in this nasty and uncouth fashion at your poor father's table, where we also had dinners of twenty millions?"

"Now they're almost calling each other liars," Mina said, a moment later. Indeed, each of these honourable capitalists claimed to know more than his neighbour about what was happening in London and particularly in New York, then in the grip of a commercial crisis.

"I am of precisely the contrary opinion," Monsieur Pomar was saying. "I tell you that the returns from New Orleans are coming in crates of dollars, we don't even bother to accept commercial paper at seven or even eight per cent."

This dinner cast Mina into a profound reverie; Madame

Wanghen even noted that this tendency to brood in silence was not altered by the brilliant crush which followed the baron's dinner party.

The dinner had consisted almost entirely of money-people. The party afterwards included all the young women of the rich banker's acquaintance, who were eager not to overlook one of the most magnificent salons of Paris and one of the most frequented. These ladies arrived almost all together, between nine-thirty and ten o'clock. They took up positions on either side of the chimney piece. The Wanghen ladies remarked, to their great satisfaction, that no one formed a regular circle, as at the Bourse. As the newcomers arrived, individual conversations were begun. More than one hundred fifty men appeared, one after the other: the youngest and most influential deputies, a few generals, some doctors, several writers seeking in the same fashion to be known by parading their faces like a prospectus—all passed in review. Unfortunately for the curiosity of the two foreign visitors, no one was announced at the House of Vintimille, and the Wanghen ladies did not know until later the famous names attached to the faces they had been unable to identify. Very few of these gentlemen spoke to the ladies, though certainly not for lack of an opportunity to do so, for several were strolling through the apartments and peering at the pictures.

Ever since he had received his new title, the baron lived in mortal fear of the lampoons of the comic papers, and it was to fend off this disadvantage that he had invited his nephew the squadron leader, whom the baroness especially disliked. Such a bellicose measure was his own invention. Monsieur de Miossince, a great personage whom he greatly respected, had told him: "A collection of pictures is quite in line with your new title. Buy paintings whose creators

enjoy a certain reputation in the papers and whom you hear praised."

Monsieur de Vintimille had leaped at this idea, and he was consequently an enlightened protector of the arts.

Madame Wanghen asked the names of certain extremely noisy young men who appeared to be rather well known in such society; their affability toward Mina was marked. Alone among all the women present, she was honoured by their attention. But nothing could distract her for long from a deep reverie quite alien to her character. She desired to leave by eleven o'clock, though in most cases she never thought such evenings lasted long enough.

"What is the matter, my dear?" Madame Wanghen asked as they stepped into their carriage.

"The coarseness of these people," Mina sighed. "Have I been deceived?" she went on, her voice slow and pensive. "Are these the amiable French? Does the agreeable society I have dreamed of exist on this earth?"

"My poor Mina, I hope you're not feeling ill? Nothing in particular wounded you during this dinner?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"Ah, you lift a great weight from my heart. I feared that you might have taken a sudden passion for that rich Monsieur——, or for his friendly antagonist the handsome Monsieur——."

"What coarseness! Ah mamma, let us never see such people again!"

"Now be fair, my child. Have we not obtained the positive and material advantages which German society denies us? Would a future minister have spoken a word to you in Königsberg? Would we have found ourselves at table in Prussia with people of such importance as deputies with an income of a hundred thousand pounds? And upon request-

ing such an evening, here in France, you and I have been granted the places of honour. For obviously the society this evening did not consider any of those lovely ladies who came in later on as being more important in rank than ourselves."

"Well, mamma, in Prussia I have never had such a heavy heart as I have at this moment. Lord! What creatures! If I were my own mistress, I believe I should set out for Königsberg this very moment."

"But Mina dear, did one or another of these gentlemen fail to show you proper respect? I've never seen you in such a violent depression."

At this word Mina burst into tears. "It's better to yield to these little sillinesses," she murmured to her mother, struggling to smile through her tears; "it will pass all the sooner. Would to God I could complain of someone in particular . . . Those men horrify me," she said, crying all the harder and hiding her face on her mother's shoulder.

Madame Wanghen saw that she must speak to her daughter, and that the sooner she did so the sooner this *crise de nerfs* would pass. "I saw you suddenly turn pale at dinner, but the dining room was large and well ventilated, it was certainly not too warm; myself, I was admiring those elegant columns and the little windows above them—it was like the royal palace in Berlin."

"Oh mamma, what do such material things matter to me? The coarseness of those men! . . ."

"I thought much the same thing when I saw you go pale, but they were not raising their voices too much—even the choice of their words was polite enough."

"Oh if only they had let themselves be carried away! They would have some excuse, one would see a little less of the true nature of these uncouth souls. Ah, mamma, did you look at their faces? The terrible crudity of those souls so

happy to possess money! Lord, what must such people be like in the bosom of their families, where there is nothing to keep them from saying all they think? Ah, mamma," Mina said, her tears falling thick and fast, "what kind of people have we fallen among?"

"Now for once you will be fair to our poor Königsberg," said Madame Wanghen. "You have seen around our dinner table, on the day of your father's birthday, the Jacobsens, the Wolfraths, the Stennebergs, the Emperios, all the best people of the wealthy class in eastern Prussia. Now certainly these people, without even including your father, possessed at least twenty million of their francs, like the ones tonight. Did they speak with such harshness, did they employ that profoundly rude manner? Amid the strong feelings that beset them, and in all their eagerness to convince their neighbours of their importance, did not those men tonight seem capable of anything?"

"That is the word, mamma, you have found just the word! And the manners these French moneybags display makes them only the more loathsome. No, whatever position you try to imagine these people to have, you always see them behaving according to the strict rules of an abominable selfishness. Above all, and at whatever price, they want to persuade whoever hears them, first that they have a lot of money, and second that they enjoy the highest consideration, and third that they are ever so intelligent."

"Remember the gentle gaiety and true bonhomie of Herr Stenneberg, of Herr Wolfrath, even of our good Jacobsen, when they were at the table of their friend Pierre Wanghen?"

"Well, you can certainly say that these people form a perfect contrast with our good Germans," Mina confirmed. She did not continue her thought: that she ought to return

to Königsberg and abandon any hope of finding something better. No doubt she esteemed the Stennebergs, the Wolfraths, the Jacobsens, but she found them so boring, so enslaved in heart and soul to every conventional prejudice!

"And unfortunately, it is not only the wealthy people of this fine country, as you heard at the end, when they got round to the sugar question—seven of these gentlemen were deputies and, as you know, that man with the short black hair at Madame de Vintimille's right has refused a ministry."

"Oh, I don't want to see people who have anything to do with the Chamber," said Mina with a touch of spite.

"In that case, you will have to see people from the Faubourg Saint-Germain, for whom you will be nothing but a bourgeoise."

"Forgive me, mamma dear," Mina said, flinging herself into her mother's arms, "I think that I've been very ill-tempered. I must confess that these French people are different from the ones I've known . . ."

"You mean, from the ones you read about in books. Now you have to admit . . ."

CHAPTER FIVE

A certain Monsieur de K——, an attaché at the legation in Paris, had dissipated his fortune in an attempt to *make an impression* and would not have been sorry to marry Mina's millions. He had performed several little favours for these ladies before paying them a visit. Finally, to his great satisfaction, he had obtained permission to come and see them. As to the motive of such visits, nothing is less fastidious than German bonhomie.

After Monsieur de K——, these ladies had no other acquaintance but Monsieur de Miossince, a solemn gentleman of some fifty years.

The day after the famous dinner with the moneymen, Monsieur de Miossince himself came to pay these ladies a visit. This encounter was the first real consolation that Mina's embittered heart had received. She would have been mortified to say a word about her sufferings of the night before to any other human being but her mother. Hence Monsieur de Miossince obtained no confidences in this regard, but his penetrating mind had suspected the truth, and

his visit, paid at one in the afternoon, which is to say, as soon after the dinner of the night before as manners allowed, had no other purpose than to assure himself of the truth.

Mina took an intense pleasure in encouraging Monsieur de Miossince to speak. With every word, this worthy man proved to her that not every Frenchman was constituted like those of the night before.

Anyone who could have demonstrated this truth to Mina would have made her happy indeed. Now this is what, after a quarter of an hour's conversation, Monsieur de Miossince read in Mina's heart. He had no need of extraordinary penetration to come to this realization. The heart of a German maiden is, so to speak, transparent—nothing easier than for a perspicacious man, an initiate of French civilization, to read what transpires there. But in addition, such a perspicacious man is frequently amazed to be unable to divine that heart's movements in advance. True candour escapes the oversubtle mind formed by an overrefined civilization.

Monsieur de Miossince was known in society for having refused the bishopric of Meaux which the Duke de Montenotte, his intimate friend, had sought for him and obtained from Louis XVIII. He had converted the Baron de Vintimille and his family, he aspired to convert Mina. The Abbé de Miossince was doubtless a gentleman, but before being a gentleman he desired the success of his soutane.

After an obscure youth, the Abbé de Miossince had entered society with an income of six thousand pounds and a determination to restore to the lay administration of an almshouse whatever chance might put in his way over and above those six thousand. This patient, tranquil being, immutable in his enterprises, had but one ambition, one pleasure in the world: that of pitting his simple powers against the irreligion and *indifference* so widespread in France.

Monsieur de Miossince was a fine figure of a man, he had a graceful and well-managed bearing, his pleasantly dressed blond hair was just beginning to be mixed with white, and he would have had an expressive countenance had it not been cruelly abused by smallpox. The general tone of his conversation, always very moderate, was that of a man of considerable intellect who for good reason does not say all he knows.

Many priests reproached him for not seeming priestly enough, but he could only pity such trivial considerations. Convinced that nothing great is ever done without united efforts; filled with the highest regard for Rome, that center of unity; armed with the profound approval of his directors; nothing was more indifferent to him than the petty complaints of the vulgar among his colleagues.

It was he who had made the rich Protestant banker Isaac Wentig a baron, having corresponded on this subject with the confessor of the King of ——. Monsieur de Miossince was alarmed by the advantages accruing to the corps of Protestant bankers in Paris. *Here,* he said to himself, *there is no indifference,* and he was afraid.

The conversion of the Vintimilles had cost him only a word: with eight or ten years of adroit dealings and with two hundred thousand francs of adept charities, it was easy enough to be *endured* by the French nobility, but all that was rich and elderly among that nobility was under the influence of Catholic priests who in these combative times were obliged in good conscience to oppose any significance that might be gained by a Protestant family.

Monsieur de Miossince rather hoped that Mina and her mother, seduced by the delights of Paris, would settle there, in which case Mina would seek to marry a duke; and Monsieur de Miossince was acquainted with two or three dukes, quite indifferent with regard to religion, to whom he would

not have been averse to saying quite frankly one fine day: "The Roman Catholic religion gives you a dowry of seven millions and a pure and delightful girl into the bargain; at this price are you her man? I ask you, whether or not you are a believer, for your word of honour in this affair."

His visit inspired the abbé with a deep fear that Mina would return to Prussia; he believed Madame Wanghen to be the commonplace mother of a very wealthy daughter, consequently subject to scheming, and with regard to her daughter determined upon a secret policy invariably beginning with utter deception. He had no doubt that Madame Wanghen herself desired above all things to return to Königsberg. The abbé understood absolutely nothing about the transparent souls of both mother and daughter.

With all the amazement of a calm and reasonable mind, the abbé observed the emotional alienation from France which the previous night's party had produced in Mina's soul. What he saw was so strange that he feared to be mistaken. He urged the ladies to take a half-box at the Opera, another at the Théâtre-Français, and held out every hope of a box for the remaining performances of the season at the *Bouffes.*

Baron de Vintimille had introduced Monsieur de Miossince to the Wanghen ladies as an ecclesiastic who was also a man of the world, attractive and reliable, and it was Miossince himself, it will be understood, who had originated the terms of that introduction.

As he was leaving these ladies, there entered the apartments a much less vaunted, though much more honest person: this was a simple teacher of literature, the venerable Monsieur Hiécky. It would have been difficult to possess more intellect and more resignation to one's modest fate than this sickly little fellow who had chosen to give lessons

for his living. He accepted ten francs an hour, and for this sum he and Mina were reading together La Bruyère's *Caractères.* Knowing a little German, he inquired on several occasions whether Mina perceived the malice frequently concealed in the sentences of the celebrated French *prosateur.* To his astonishment, he discovered that Mina understood what she was reading. "A strange mind," the old teacher said to himself, "she keeps going over to the window to watch two sparrows eating the crumbs she has strewn for them on the balcony, and she understands La Bruyère."

Professor Hiécky found Mina quite melancholy that morning. She had once again interrupted her lesson to observe the sparrows fluttering down to her balcony from the great trees of the Tuileries, when in the course of his explanations of La Bruyère the teacher happened to say: "In this city of Paris, which had five hundred thousand inhabitants at the time of Napoleon and which has eleven hundred thousand today, there is every sort of person, the best and the worst. Let your mind take you through the wall of a house into the salon, and you will find, in the corresponding room on the other side of the wall, on that very same floor, people of a character precisely contrary to that of the people gathered in the first salon."

"You believe so," Mina said, her colour changing.

"I have no doubt whatever," the teacher went on. "What makes today's Paris a city unique in the world is that it gathers together what is best and what is worst in every realm. Mediocre people, the insipid and the discreet, are the only sort who have no taste for Paris."

"But tell us, Monsieur, since one salon offers what is coarsest, most vulgar, and most disgusting in society, is it not likely that the same population is to be found in the neighbouring salon as well?"

"But Mademoiselle, either you have been unlucky in your experience, or else you have not deigned to pay close attention: these coarse, vulgar, etc. people were also remarkable for some surpassing quality, some superiority."

"Bravo, Monsieur," exclaimed Madame Wanghen, "you have defeated my daughter."

"Mamma is right, Monsieur," Mina said. "These people had the superiority of wealth."

"Ah, Mademoiselle, it is they who provide my living and who provoke my impatience. Without this class of persons, my lessons would still be paid at three francs an hour, as in the days of the Empire. Paris is swarming with rich people who at all costs must understand La Bruyère and the first performances of Monsieur Scribe, but they cannot do so. At twenty their attention was elsewhere, and a man is never, throughout his life, anything but the development of what he was at twenty. I am about to expose myself to ridicule, and to the most banal kind of all, that of a professor who flatters his pupil, but the truth, pure and simple, is that none of my pupils understands La Bruyère as you do, Mademoiselle, and since you are not yet twenty years old, I dare to hope you will be a woman of intellect all your life."

Madame Wanghen would have flung her arms round Monsieur Hiécky had she dared, but she contented herself with admiring the glistening little wig screwed down on his head.

"Since you are so well disposed toward me, Monsieur," Mina said, "do explain more clearly this variety you perceive in the salons of Paris."

"For anyone who has eyes in his head, nothing is more similar than the passions—or rather, the sole passion which governs all these Parisian hearts is *the desire to seem* something more than what they are; the most distinguished society is set apart by the fact that it too wishes to *seem,* but

only to seem what it is. Yet this *vanity,* this sole passion attached to every position in life, affords the most contrary effects. In the salon of which you speak, Mademoiselle, and which appears not to have won your enthusiasm, those present desired *to seem rich.* Well, for quite a long time after the Revolution of 1830, in the salons of the best society in France, people desired *to seem poor,* ruined, penniless. This was still the *desire to seem,* yet these salons were absolutely the opposite of the one which, if I may hazard a guess, seems to have so deeply shocked Mademoiselle Wanghen."

The teacher modestly took his leave, his hour was up.

"Now there is a man who had just rescued a dreary evening for us, wouldn't you say, Mina?" observed Madame Wanghen with a smile. "Where else but in Paris could one discover such a conversation after only a month's stay, and for ten francs? In Königsberg such a man would be the monarch of our professors of aesthetics."

"He would be a Hofrat* and would soon become very solemn, no longer daring to speak of certain things, and quite simply a great bore. At least now I see," Mina concluded gaily, "that *my* Paris is still worth something."

The Prussian ambassador found an opportunity to introduce the Wanghen ladies to the king and queen and to the minister of foreign affairs. Moreover, the persons to whom these ladies presented their letters of recommendation having received them graciously and invited them to dinner, Mina and her mother subsequently returned their visits at the proper interval.

"You know, Mina," Madame Wanghen said one day, as they were leaving the house of Madame la Présidente B——, who entertained in the greatest state, "you know that al-

* Stendhal's note: "Literally, Court Councillor; in Germany, the government bestows this title on all distinguished persons, for instance upon a great physician."

though we imagined ourselves, and with good reason I believe, quite superior to General von Landek, we are beginning to share his fate: we are proceeding *dégringolando.* Assuredly we have nothing to complain of, nothing is lacking in the perfect manners of these agreeable French . . ."

"How right you are, mamma! We should be unworthy of living with such intelligent people if we failed to realize that our presence is a sort of embarrassment, and produces a certain chill."

These ladies examined their consciences and inquired whether they had committed some offense to French ways upon which they might reproach themselves.

"The French are too frivolous in such matters to be offended by some violation of their ways, like that gentleman arriving from Italy who told us the other day what had happened to him in Venice. Moreover, we have visited some eight different houses, and the effect is the same everywhere."

The ladies consulted Baron de Vintimille, though with all possible delicacy. Baroness de Vintimille was one of the women with whom their failure was most evident, and they would not have wished for anything in the world to seem to be complaining to her husband.

It was also with infinite discretion and a politeness quite superior to his habitual behavior that the baron let it be understood that, absorbed as he was by the great affair of transforming a banker's fortune and position into those of a great landowner, he would not venture to give these ladies advice which might have the gravest consequences. He must confine himself to a task which would always be his first concern, that of managing their financial interests so that, *primo,* they should lose as little as possible on the exchange between Königsberg and Paris, and *secundo,* that in Paris itself they should be defrauded as little as possible.

The banker cut short his visit in a meaningful fashion.

"You see, mamma," Mina said when he had withdrawn, "it's quite clear: we have the plague, which makes our position here rather . . . *piquant*. Let us enjoy the half-box we have been fortunate enough to obtain at the Théâtre-Italien, through the kindness of Monsieur Robert. Let us attend some of those private lectures on chemistry and astronomy to which the obliging correspondent of our famous Gauss has gained us admission. In a word, let us enjoy the pleasures accessible to one and all in Paris and see what comes of it."

"Our discretion," Madame Wanghen added, "will be sure to diminish the frequency of our visits in society, and *découdre sans déchirer,* as good Monsieur Hiécky said yesterday in your lesson on French proverbs."

The Abbé de Miossince had suggested to these ladies with infinite and perhaps all too remarkable dexterity, for it was remarked by Mina, that they might be exposed to a sort of monomania becoming frequent in Paris, now that all Europe had perceived that Paris was still the city least afflicted by the rancours of politics. The adroit abbé wanted to speak of the ruined gentlemen whose supreme talent is the ability to spend with consummate grace a great fortune they no longer possess. Such men, by nature endowed with the majordomo's gifts, would soon be presenting themselves from all sides to Madame Wanghen and her daughter.

"Well, Monsieur Abbé, we shall see how skillful they are," said Mina, who was not sorry to disconcert Monsieur de Miossince, who seemed to her to have been a little too adroit in this diplomatic communication of his.

Madame Wanghen stared at her daughter. She knew the girl had an obsessive horror of being courted for her millions.

"Unknown as mamma and I are in Paris," Mina con-

tinued, "we must expect to be somewhat neglected, to find a little solitude around us. If, at first, people worthy of attention should seek us out for the millions (this was Mina's expression in speaking of her fortune), I think mamma and I will not pay much heed to such success, unflattering as it is to our personal merit; but they will ultimately rescue us from solitude, so long as they are not so clumsy as to make us mindful of it, to make us realize it in spite of ourselves."

The Abbé de Miossince was astonished, and soon brought his visit to an end, as was the custom of this conventional and perfectly consistent man whenever something unexpected happened to him.

"My dear daughter, it seems to me that you rather suddenly espoused some rather vulgar sentiments."

"I suspect, mamma, that Monsieur de Miossince has plans. I'd prefer him to be not quite so certain as to ours."

"But we were saying, just the other day at Madame de Vintimille's, that our plans were to avoid choosing you a husband before you turned twenty, and today you seem to be saying the opposite."

"Perhaps Monsieur de Miossince is not aware of what we said the other day. Perhaps, if someone repeated it to him, he will have seen it as a precaution to diminish the rather too evident anxiety of Madame de Vintimille, who on that same day virtually told us my presence was ruining her daughters' chances with whatever suitors might come their way."

On one of his visits, the Abbé de Miossince suggested to Madame Wanghen that since the question of money carried no weight, it would be just as well, with so young a daughter and especially one endowed with so many external advantages, to acquire the company of a sort of chaperon,

though not a paid companion—it would be more desirable to find, if possible, some distant relative or at least a respectable person who could be presented to society as a relative.

Madame Wanghen made no reply to this overture, she seemed to regard it as no more than an ordinary observation, and soon other matters were discussed, but no sooner had Monsieur de Miossince departed than she conferred with Mina: "The notion is a good one, let us send for our cousin Strombeck, she is as fond of us as we of her, she is discreet and prudent, she may be still a little young, she is not thirty, but her extended misfortunes, following her marriage to a nobleman at Court, have afforded her a knowledge of the world quite superior to her age. Where could we find a woman's heart so loyal to us as hers? To such a person we can say whatever we think."

"Having done so badly with a great lord for a husband," Mina concurred, "she might have some ideas as to the art of honourably repelling all these embassy secretaries who present themselves for the millions."

It so happened that on that very evening, the Prussian minister informed the ladies that a special courier would be leaving during the night for Berlin. Madame von Strombeck received her wealthy cousins' invitation with joyful excitement. She had no more than three or four thousand pounds' income, sole remains of the dowry of eight hundred thousand francs she had brought Herr von Strombeck, one of the nobles of Berlin who at thirty-six years of age had died of dissipation, utterly ruined. It seemed to Madame von Strombeck that her lucky days had returned, she took the post chaise from Königsberg to Hamburg, and in ten days by steamer had reached Paris from Le Havre.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ABBÉ DE MIOSSINCE WAS INDEED ASTONished, upon his first visit after his suggestion of a chaperon, to find the ladies eagerly awaiting the arrival of their cousin Strombeck. The abbé was extremely vexed. The existence of this person now made impossible the introduction of a certain Madame d'Arblay, an individual much prized for the learned prudence and the engaging gentleness of her manners, and who had already assisted the abbé in the conversion of a wealthy Protestant family strongly attached to the error of its ways.

These two failures, or at least these two surprises, one coming hard upon the other, disconcerted the abbé's resolves. "One attributes simplicity to the German character," he told himself, "but it falls into error precisely by its innocence, by its candour, by that complete absence of the notion of deception. Companionable as we are, who would have supposed these ladies would not share with me the notion of summoning this fatal cousin from such a distance? If I really aspire to the happiness of bringing these strayed consciences into the bosom of the Church, I must redouble my concern

and place this matter among those most important to me. I have sinned by a defect which is no longer of my age," added the Abbé de Miossince with compunction (and a deep sense of all his wrongs): "*by overconfidence.* Perhaps I should have proposed Madame d'Arblay more explicitly. She has a perfect knowledge of French customs, an advantage which might have been decisive in the eyes of these ladies. Madame Wanghen and her daughter are too intelligent not to see that their naïveté, their trust in others' perfect simplicity and innocence, occasionally leads them to apparently bizarre behaviour that might be misinterpreted. . . It becomes necessary to study the character of this ruined lady so disappointed by her husband, who is about to arrive among us. This event complicates the question, and a motive of conduct which might be regarded as having a probable and sufficient effect on the spirit of both mother and daughter may fail entirely when applied to this third person who has lived at the court of Berlin. I have lost *a certain time.* Less prudence is in order, the difference between the customs of Königsberg and those of Paris will soften what would be too harsh in my representations if I were dealing with Frenchwomen. Why, in dealing with a heart of eighteen, and above all with a German heart, should I deprive myself of the opportunities of love? Why not produce my little hero? . . . The difficulty will be to manage his appearance; his habit is to act before he thinks."*

Within the hour, the abbé was on his horse. We have

* Stendhal's note: "Mina, the girl in the green hat on the Loire, June 7, 1837. Mina has just such a face. I read in every feature what the young grain-salesman was saying to her (Nantes, June 8 '37)."

Stendhal is alluding to an encounter on an excursion described in *Memoirs of a Tourist:* ". . . Nothing less than one of the loveliest heads I have ever met with in my whole life. . . . The features of this beautiful Breton girl in the green hat are . . . profoundly French."

said, I believe, that he was a man of intelligence; moreover his superiors treated him as such, realizing that the abbé was as obedient to their will as *a stick in a blind man's hands*. Hence you will not be surprised to see Monsieur de Miossince riding through the *allées* of the Bois de Boulogne: he was hoping to encounter the young Duke de Montenotte without seeming to be looking for him.

Soon he glimpsed him from a distance, mounted on one of his handsomest horses; the duke rode admirably, indeed to that very hour it was his only real talent. Moreover, even in this elementary action, his character of coldness and general indifference was visible. It was scarcely conceivable that so glacial a creature could be the son of that celebrated General Malin-La-Rivoire, one of Napoleon's most illustrious companions in his immortal Italian campaign of 1796.

This son of a general who had been made a marshal and a duke when his master had made himself an emperor, was just twenty-two upon his graduation from the École Polytechnique with the rank of lieutenant in the artillery. Though not precisely tall, he could be considered a fine-looking fellow, whose only defect was to wear his hair in a singular fashion, cut straight across, level with his ears, almost *more germanico*. He had a high colour, though his eyes were a trifle bloodshot.

Despite his extreme and general coldness, upon closer inspection, as the abbé realized, a certain affectation of simplicity might be discerned. For example, Leon had just had the principal rooms furnished in the mansion his mother had obliged him to rent, and though indeed splendid, every piece in them was of solid oak, an arrangement pronounced hideous by his mother, a duchess to her fingertips who was hounding her son to marry.

His father had died still a young man, and Leon had been

a duke since the age of five. At twenty-two, on the threshold of real life, he was rather embarrassed by the role this title appeared to force upon him. No doubt he would have challenged anyone so indiscreet as to suggest he understood how matters stood with Leon's soul, but the fact is that to his misfortune he was not completely the dupe of his own title. He did not believe in it as a true duke of less than average intelligence might have done.

At those moments when life seemed a fine thing, Napoleon Malin-La-Rivoire was quite pleased to be a duke. When he heard those around him speak of the dire straits into which a poor devil of seventeen must enter, the flattering illusions and the lively joys of first youth quite undone by the melancholy phrase, *a man must live,* Leon would muse: "At least I am well out of that, I have a fine inheritance solidly invested in land up north, and I am a duke." But this was his idleness speaking, for in his serious moments, he was not quite sure he deserved all he had. Such is the effect of wretched little sheets like the *Charivari.*

Is it conducive to the happiness of France, he would think, that there should be dukes? On the days he was disposed to look on the dark side of things, and this was at least five out of the week, the answer to this question seemed to him more than doubtful. On such days he felt disposed to take offence at everything. It was in vain that he attempted to distract himself with that maxim he recalled having read in Duclos: "the world was there before my time, and not to take advantage of it when it favours me would be to show a pusillanimous heart."

But he was too much a gentleman, or too pensive, or if you like too melancholy, to swallow that medicine. Through all the vanities and velleities of his age, he was beginning to need his own esteem, that of others no longer sufficed him.

It was to escape all this intellectual confusion and also to imitate, somewhat, his father's example that he so enjoyed action, or at least activity: he was the first fencer, the best shot, and the highest jumper of his generation.

For a year or two, at the end of his sojourn at the École Polytechnique, he had imagined he would find happiness in England when he could go there and buy himself three pure-blood horses. In England, where he spent eight months, he learned to be a man of the turf* and had bought five instead of three horses, all magnificent creatures, each of which had its own special qualities: strength, lightness, etc.

Later, finding himself no happier with his five English horses, he had conceived a plan to travel through Syria to the Arabian border, where he would buy Arab mares. But how to persuade his mother, who was in a frenzy to marry him off, to consent to so long a journey? At the moment of the present narrative, he was beginning to feel that such an expedition was a vast expenditure of time and effort merely to obtain some horses. And besides, what could he do with Arab mares, said the counsel of disgust, that he had not already done with his five English stallions? He had no answer.

In vain had he encouraged himself, after a few days, in order to give a sort of plausibility to the venture: "I'll go to Egypt to see the battlefields where my father shed his blood." This reason had seemed sufficient in his pensive moments for a week, and then he had arrived at this terrible conclusion: "At my age, my father would have laughed at any proposition to bother going to see the place where *his* father had distinguished himself. But is it my fault," he asked himself resentfully, "if the government no longer af-

* Stendhal's note: "a man who spends his life at the track, who makes it his entire business."

fords anyone the occasion to distinguish himself? . . . Fortunately for France, she no longer needs such sublime figures whom she rewarded by immortal glory and without whom, in '93, she would have become a province of Prussia or of Austria."

The very day Monsieur de Miossince encountered the young duke in the Bois de Boulogne, the following notion was darkening his thoughts and making him anything but an agreeable companion for the friends with whom he was riding: "When I curse Louis-Philippe's government, I am as absurd as a country doctor who turns against his village because no one in it has yellow fever."

Pensive as he was, he was not silent, on the contrary, yet if a moment or two elapsed without his being required to speak, he said to himself: "If you want your country to reward you by glory, seek out her present needs and satisfy them. But," added the inner voice, "if my country needs a prefect who is not on his knees before ministerial whims, or a minister who takes the trouble to think seriously two hours a day about the improvement of the very thing which gives his ministry its name, instead of plotting to preserve his portfolio and please the Court without displeasing the Chamber, what would I stand to gain, even by being the honourable prefect or that unprecedented minister? Renown? Respect? Hardly. Who will speak of me two years after my death, and even in my lifetime who will be convinced of my merits? Who the devil will take the trouble to inquire whether a certain prefect who persecuted the wretched Poles in 1834 really wanted to smother the bad example of rebellion or only to curry favour with an intimidating minister and keep his place?"

At that moment the duke would have liked to take a difficult gate. Amidst conversations about the latest races at

Chantilly, the poor young man was overwhelmed by the train of his ideas, epitomized in the terrible phrase he felt so deeply: *noblesse oblige.*

He had no friend, no confidant. Once or twice he had attempted to touch on these great questions with one of his sporting companions. The answer had been "Yes" and a yawn which left his whole soul only too happy at not being accused of trying to seem *profound.* But one feeling could distract him a little: he loved his mother, yet during a recent staghunt in Belgium, on the estates of a great lord in that country who was his intimate friend in equine matters, he had suddenly been obsessed by an idea upon seeing the poor stag pursued and tormented by the hounds: "If I were vain enough," he had mused with a melancholy smile, "to compare myself with such a noble creature, that is how I am pursued by marriages. My mother on one side, speaking in the name of what I owe my illustrious father, my family, and my dynasty which does not exist—and on the other, like those village mongrels that momentarily join in with the noble dogs of the pack, all the mothers of Paris society who have daughters to marry off."

That personage so respectable in the eyes of bookish morality, a rich mother with daughters to get off her hands, was poor Leon's *bête noire.* He saw leagues away the various ruses of both mother and daughters, the tender and enthusiastic kisses which at crucial moments—when it was clear they were being watched—the mother gave her daughters or the daughters their mother, depending on the circumstances. To all these touching spectacles, I must say, he greatly preferred the society of those poor little dancers at the Opera who earn 7 francs 5 centimes each time they appear in a ballet. "The role of these girls," he decided, "is at least sincere, without ulterior motives, and moreover it is based on rea-

son: they really need the sum which their lover or rather their friend gives them, for the sentiment they inspire hardly exceeds a little friendship, and even then it is based on pity, on the sight of a thousand things which they lack in order to live at all."

Amidst all these doubts, this young duke, now the possessor of five magnificent horses (three months earlier, he had had the misfortune of losing the famous Alida, an admirable mare), had no idea what he actually was, and certainly no one knew what he would be. His opinion of himself was that he did not have a good enough time for a young man. It was a hundred to one that he would end his days a peer of France, ever so reasonable, ever so serious, ever so meticulous, living on his splendid estate of Cossey eight months of the year, rather melancholy on rainy days and even, often enough, on days of bright sunshine. He said to himself with a sigh: "I can't find anything to do. Lucky the poor, lucky the rich who want to become barons!"

He had already had several mistresses in the salons, whom he had found infinitely more hypocritical, more troublesome, more tenacious when he sought to leave them, and more insupportable after three months together, than those poor little Opera girls whom he sometimes treated to a dinner. Since he had absolutely no fixed principles, he had not yet quite resolved that these little girls were infinitely worthier than the actresses who perform in the salons and work petit point for their lover's footstool.

"At least," he added with a deep sigh, "in the days of Madame d'Épinay and Jean-Jacques, those actresses had some spirit, and around them one could find a Diderot, a Rousseau, a Grimm, a Duclos, with whom one could talk—it was diverting."

It will be seen that without quite realizing it, the duke

loved wit. He was still ten or twenty years away from the experience of being able to say why; he had yet to learn that, like courage under fire, it is the only commodity which cannot be altogether replaced by hypocrisy. The Abbé de Miossince was musing on all the young duke's virtues, so well known to him, and looking for a way they might greet each one another. He often dwelled on one thing that astonished him, and made him fear he might not be able to manage this young man so readily as he hoped. This thing will surprise the young men whose supreme happiness consists in riding a fine hired horse in the Bois de Boulogne or in receiving an invitation for the Friday ball: most of the time, Leon would have been happier, arriving at a ball, to hear himself announced by the simple name of Malin-La-Rivoire, which his father had sufficiently distinguished, rather than by that of the Duke of Montenotte; by the name his father had borne three quarters of his glorious life rather than by the pompous title which he had inherited upon his father's death and which seemed to force him to have certain opinions and to take offence at certain jokes.

"Furthermore," the abbé was thinking, "he is as fierce as his father when you press him too far. This lack of civilized spirit is becoming quite inconvenient in these young men of the new breed, whom Court manners have not yet had time to break in."

CHAPTER SEVEN

AS HE WAS GIVING HIMSELF UP TO THIS last disinterested regret, the abbé allowed the duke to see him, for an instant, at the end of a glade, and then vanished. Leon, who had no desire to remain with the friends with whom he was riding, turned his horse into the glade down which he had seen the abbé disappear. The duke was guided by the pleasure of spending a quarter of an hour with a man truly different from those he was leaving. "Monsieur de Miossince would die rather than acquire ten thousand francs by chicanery," Leon was thinking, "and the friends I'm leaving speak only of money, worship money, see only one means of superiority in the world: money, and ultimately are ready to do a great many things in order to earn ten thousand francs."

"Ah, Monsieur the Duke," said the abbé, who had slowed his horse upon seeing Leon ride up, "are you leaving those brilliant young fellows for an old man who is rather sadly taking some exercise for his health?"

"It's true they are my friends, and moreover may be counted, I believe, among the best fellows in Paris, but they

are only trying to be brilliant. After an hour, the effort you feel they are making exhausts the spectator, and Monsieur de Miossince's company has never exhausted anyone, and has often enlightened me . . ." This was said in a mathematical and almost morose tone of voice.

The abbé had made it a principle never to lead the conversation; it was by answering others that he revealed his mind and achieved his purposes. The young duke, like any bored man, in a quarter of an hour spoke of everything under the sun. Among his other remarks occurred this one:

"The government would do well to send eighty thousand men to Spain, that would break in the army, which is now rather like a pack of hounds with no love for the hunter sending them off. All the old officers would take their retirement pay, the noncoms would get their epaulettes, and I myself would try not to imitate my father—but at least I would undergo the baptism of blood which suits my name, and then perhaps I could leave off with a clear conscience."

"No one could be more discreet than Madame the Duchess, but to abandon the world in one's own lifetime would mean death to your mother. What I'm telling you is not at all meant as advice, Monsieur the Duke. If you take such a decision, however, I should go and spend six months of the year at Cossey* with Madame the Duchess to reconcile her to that terrible moment."

"You are absolutely right, Monsieur de Miossince, and that is what increases my self-disgust. If you, who owe my mother nothing, were for six months to sacrifice Paris and the battle against impiety in which you are so fortunate as to be passionately engaged, what should I be doing, as the oldest son of this excellent woman? In truth, I feel unequal

* Stendhal's note: This was the Duke's estate.

to all my duties. You know that the day before yesterday, there was yet again a question of a marriage. Would you believe, Monsieur, that there are days when I am tempted to hand over the estate and the title to my second brother, and let myself be known quite simply as Monsieur Malin-La-Rivoire, lieutenant in the artillery . . . I should be lost in the crowd, and my mother would transfer her projects for settlement to my brother."

"Two crucial errors, and in the mouth of a mathematician as well! O d'Alembert, O La Grange! First of all, you would be a man much more extraordinary and famous for having resigned the dukedom, supposing the thing could be done. When you enter a salon, many people my age do not look up when they hear a young duke announced by the major-domo, for they expect quite simply to see a more or less marked nuance of simplicity and noble affectation. But I confess to you that I myself would stare, and very attentively, at a young man who had renounced a dukedom. Is he a sincere republican? I should ask myself. Is he a hypocrite of republicanism? which is more likely; or is he a hypocrite of simplicity? There would be no end to my suppositions. And the world, after having hesitated somewhat among so many, would end by something I am reluctant to say."

"I shall say it, Monsieur, I am not a weakling: the world would end by disdain. I have told myself that, I would be belittled, greatly belittled, like the disdained and thrice contemptible son of Oliver Cromwell, that poor Richard whose very name wakens my pity."

"One could go to America, or make a three years' journey around the world."

"I've thought of it. What would become of me if, upon my return, I were to find my mother dead of disappointment?" And the young duke's forehead contracted violently.

"Well, Monsieur the Duke," the abbé resumed after a moment's silence, "each of us, if he is an honest man, has a burden to bear in this world. And the man who is not honest has a much heavier burden, a much more troubling one; that of a bad conscience."

There was a great silence, the abbé would have preferred the next step of the argument to be made by the young duke, and esteemed his intellect sufficiently to hope for the possibility.

But strangely enough, and as a melancholy effect of the age's dejection, this young man—handsome, rich, already distinguished at so early an age, and who had entered the École Polytechnique first in his class, quite remorselessly occupied his mind with anticipating and enumerating his miseries. How different from his father! the abbé was thinking; of course his father, at that age, was not such a charming figure of a man.

"But," the abbé said all of a sudden, as though struck by an unforeseen thought, "yesterday I was visiting a house of which I am suddenly reminded by your arguments about your position. Since we cannot think of anything else, at this moment, let us wage war on melancholy itself. Madame the Duchess loves in you a lovable son."

"*Lovable,* that is the word," said the duke with a bitter smile.

"Lovable at least in her eyes, and in mine, and above all worthy of being loved. But Madame the Duchess also loves, and perhaps to excess, the greatness of her house. She regards such a passion as a vestige of what she owes her husband. Marry a wealthy girl, beget a son (or more than one, perhaps; after all it is a matter of a year or eighteen months), and Madame de Montenotte will grant you, without disappointment or grief, permission to depart for three years

some five hundred leagues from Paris. After three years, you will no longer be so young, you will be forgotten . . ."

Monsieur de Miossince might have spoken for a long while, the Duke stared at him with wide eyes, and a happy smile, extremely rare in his physiognomy, appeared at the corners of his mouth.

"Monsieur, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, you have been so kind as to consider my situation and the very thing I dreaded most in the world: exposing my reputation. But Monsieur, this young bride who will adore simplicity and solitude, as they all claim, will marry me to lead the life of a duchess. The *bouffes,* the balls, the Court, if there is a Court, or at the very least a learned sulkiness and the sermons of Monsieur the Abbé Bon, and finally under one name or another, a brilliant life in the most brilliant of all possible worlds. Shall I be a knave, my dear abbé?" And Léon's countenace became expressive and eloquent.

"Good," thought the abbé, "he is going to be indiscreet and sincere."

"Shall I be a knave? Instead of that duchess's life, which this young woman is entitled to expect from me, should I inflict—as Lord Byron inflicted on his wife—the affront of a singular, obscure existence, without liveried lackeys and glittering coaches? She will make an uproar and leave me, my mother will scream like a hyena in every salon that I am a monster. But no, she and her mother will be angels of sweetness and abnegation, they will accept me as a necessary evil, an inevitable one; but I, Monsieur, what shall I not be calling myself? If today I am not an example of wild gaiety, what shall I be, once married and vexed by a wife who wants to play the duchess, and with even further remorse if I behave like Lord Byron?"

"For some eight days now, I have known a young

woman," resumed the abbé with a perfect sang-froid which contrasted handsomely with the impassioned expression glistening in the eyes of his young interlocutor, "I have known a rich young woman whose sole passion is to seem poor. Her wealth is some four hundred leagues from Paris, and a husband is always required to be making important emendations to his wife's fortune. Madame the Duchess will be the first to understand this necessity, she who invests in your estate at least three quarters of her own income in just such emendations."

"You are miraculous," said the astonished duke, "but is not all this a fable, a fiction?"

"It is an idea which has just occurred to me," answered the abbé innocently, "hearing you speak so sensibly of our society, of simplicity, and of our fashionable stupidity—you promise your wife, above all, to give her the kind of life which in two years will be *à la mode* for duchesses. And where is the astrologer who can forecast the fashion which will prevail in two years? Well now! this young woman has estates on the Vistula. Do you hear the word? Has there ever been a more lovable river? You will confect, if you like, a legend against this river which invades your castle. It seems to me quite simply an ideal solution for you, my dear duke. The *drawback,* as our English friends say, is that I have known these ladies only eight days, that I know nothing of their plans, that perhaps the young lady's hand is already promised, etc., etc. In a word, this is nothing more than a risk to be run, a campaign to be engaged, a battle to join. I can offer you only a notion, and a notion which has just occurred to me but two moments ago."

The duke turned crimson with delight at the notion of a campaign to be waged, an active purpose to his life. The abbé broke off to let this happiness be established, sink in,

make the young man self-conscious. Then he added, weighing his words: "To have an essentially rational enterprise four hundred leagues from Paris and beyond the Vistula is in effect *to have liberty.* There is one rather singular condition, it is true, but of which I shall be the sole guardian, I whom you esteem . . ."

"I esteem you, it is true, Monsieur," broke in the young duke almost tenderly, "and I shall allow myself to say, at this moment, that the deepest gratitude is united with the most sincere esteem. What pledge must I make?"

"That of constantly conducting yourself as a good and faithful Roman Catholic."

"Ah, I understand!" interrupted the young duke, and all the animation of his countenance vanished, his features contracted, and in the twinkling of an eye the signs of ennui replaced the aspect of hope. "The young woman is a fanatical Catholic, the kind known as an *angel of virtue,* she will be like Madame de Bérulle, I shall be overwhelmed with prayers and services, even now I can see myself living across from Saint Thomas Aquinas."

"And what if this were true?" replied the abbé with a glance of genuine hatred. The duke had just wounded him deeply. "And what if this were true? If the young woman is perfectly estimable? If at this price, upon the birth of your first son, you were to ac-quire li-ber-ty," he said, drawing out his words with a strange emphasis. "I should say further," added the abbé, and his glance resumed all its accustomed gentleness, all the mellowness of civilization. He was feeling a certain remorse, his soul had just revealed itself, an exceptional event for him. "This woman who would afford you liberty is as yet a Protestant, and her family is only just thinking of converting to Catholicism, hence I am asking you: *primo,* to contribute to that conversion; *se-*

cundo, as I have said, to conduct yourself in every respect as a good and faithful Roman Catholic."

"Ah, Monsieur de Miossince!" exclaimed the young man, deathly pale at this moment, though normally his complexion was enlivened with the vivid health of twenty years. He was collapsing beneath his felicity.

"The sole condition," continued the triumphant abbé, emphasizing each word, "would be a solemn promise given to me and conceived as follows: *so long as I shall derive some direct or indirect advantage from my marriage to Mademoiselle M. I shall conduct myself as a good and faithful Roman Catholic and never separate myself from Rome."*

"But what the devil does Rome matter to me!" the young man impetuously exclaimed. He inherited this savagery from his father. The abbé was familiar with this family mannerism, and was not distressed. It required an inherited vice to make the young duke forget, at this moment, the perfect politeness of which the Abbé de Miossince was giving him so fine a model. But the duke had just been made sublimely happy, and in over a year perhaps he had not known such a moment . . .

"Pardon, Monsieur," he said suddenly as he blushed crimson and as he brought his horse closer to the abbé's, "I need you to give me your hand. I am answering with my rudeness the man who is so generously attempting to remove from my heart a burden which is smothering me. In truth, Monsieur, I have a wretched character, I recognize in myself all the savagery for which, I understand, my father incurred so much reproach and which, I believe, won him so many battles. You must know of this defect, you have often rendered services to the father as to the son. Will you forgive me, Monsieur?"

"It is nothing, I had the impression of seeing the general

before me," replied the abbé with the most fatherly expression, and the young duke's gratitude was beyond all bounds. He seized the abbé's hand and pressed it enthusiastically. The abbé allowed this sentiment to establish itself for a few seconds, and then he added carefully:

"Your soul is a noble one, Léon, and your father would be pleased with you. But I was speaking of a solemn promise."

"But Monsieur, what can I do for the religion of Rome?"

"My young friend, say 'religion' without adding any further word; such is its venerable title. One day you shall be a peer, one day perhaps you shall be a general, for sooner or later the monarchy must renounce putting the first-comer at the head of the force which, like a powder keg, can overturn everything within the State. This future, so likely in my eyes, will be realized, and you will be able, with the help of the fortune which will follow this marriage, to become a great landowner and acquire in some Department a decisive influence on a quantity of lawyers, of country physicians, of wealthy farmers. You will thus be able to send, or help to send, to the Chamber of Deputies men who favor the holy cause of visible civilization, which is to say, the cause of Rome. Indeed, you see now the extent and the power of the pledge I am asking of you."

"I know that in the past you have been compelled to struggle against impiety."

"Indeed such is the sole enterprise of my life, but above all things one must not increase the irritation of men's minds, and I ask you never to speak to me, either for good or ill. Let us return to our subject. This marriage is far from being an achieved thing, I possess unfortunately neither the young person's choice nor her mother's nor that of a certain cousin. It is a notion which has had only half an hour's ex-

istence. However, there are only these three wills to overcome. There is no father, no brother, no men in the family."

"An enormous advantage," said Leon (this was the name by which he chose to be called: he felt that there was a blasphemy in mingling with all the trivial circumstances of life the great name of Napoleon which had been bestowed upon him, the emperor having been his godfather). "An enormous advantage, Monsieur; there will be no one to make me blush for his interested, perhaps even his base actions."

"Well then!" said the abbé, "the answer tomorrow, here. Not a word to anyone. I am not the master of this affair, you will be indeed surprised by how little influence I shall have to offer you. It is a mere possibility which by an incredible accident has come into my mind. But also I am asking you for the solemn promise we have discussed only in the case whereby this possible notion might lead to something."

"Success or not, Monsieur," Leon said with a deeply serious expression, "I shall be under what seems to me the deepest obligation to you. Till tomorrow here, at six o'clock."

"Agreed, and absolute silence, even with Madame the Duchess."

"Oh, then you have said nothing to her?" Leon exclaimed, amazed and delighted.

"Nor shall I say anything until you have your answer. It is an unforeseen notion, remember."

"Ah! Monsieur de Miossince, how much I owe you!" Leon said with feeling.

"There we have my little fellow nicely prepared," the abbé was thinking . . . "I recognize the *frenzy* of Malin-La-Rivoire, as we were saying, but instead of running off and dreaming or doing some other useless thing, the father

would have galloped away to do something, anything—try to rent an apartment in the young lady's house, in a word, take action. This generation is, one must say, of another species! But may it please God," the abbé added, his thoughts returning to his undertaking, "that I were as far advanced in the young lady's eyes . . . As it happens, I know her much less well than I do Leon . . . Oh, Leon is won over, I have given him a considerable moment of happiness which he will not soon forget . . . But that sudden and sincere horror, in this generation of impious youth, for an apartment across from Saint Thomas Aquinas! Ah!" the abbé added with a sigh, "there is a great deal to be done!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE YOUNG DUKE RAPIDLY TURNED HIS HORSE and at a gallop rejoined his groom, who had been following at some five hundred paces. He gave him a note for his mother, informing her that he was dining in the country. Released from his servant, the duke continued his gallop, driving his horse like a madman. Before giving himself up to the delicious happiness of reflecting upon the abbé's notion, he wanted to be quite sure of not being interrupted by some tactless outsider. Unfortunately he had many friends.

At last he halted his horse at the village of Jouy, beyond Meudon. Here he put his horse in a good stable and at last went for a walk in the woods, having concealed his Cross and determined to recognize no one, should he be approached. "Then I might be able to travel!" he exclaimed at last with a deep sigh, once he found himself in a dim lane, "to travel without failing in my duties to my mother! I might be settled before *a year!* Far from Paris! . . . *To do as I like,*" he kept repeating aloud as he walked on under the trees. "I might be away from Paris for a year, two

years, three! And with the sole obligation of remaining a good and loyal Catholic. Devil take the Catholics! What do they matter to me? I am a peer, but I have no voice in council, perhaps I shall never have one! Moreover, I shall quite clearly establish my right to travel for ten years—why ten years? All my life, if I want to! Indeed, if my mother is satisfied, what else must I deal with in society? Moreover, this abbé is amazingly subtle, he loves me as the son of a man who wanted to make him a bishop, he says only things that he knows to be possible and that won't offend my mother's happiness!"

Upon this notion, the duke leaped for joy, for the first time in his life, and he was twenty-two years old. Leon was too happy not to flee society, that evening he secluded himself in the fourth row of boxes at the Théâtre-Italien. Here, for the whole evening, the music helped him build infinite castles in Spain on the felicity announced by the abbé. At last he was going to act, to have a goal of action in life, but he did not explain his position so clearly to himself. For all his mathematics, he was a man who felt more than he thought. He was anything but a philosopher.

But since Leon's mother, the dowager Duchess of Montenotte, is to play a part in her son's life, it is as well to say something about her.

Fifteen days before the Abbé de Miossince's promenade in the Bois de Boulogne, the duchess happened to be with her friend Countess Dalvel in a salon which also contained the Duchess de Rufec. Countess Dalvel, an infinitely witty woman, constituted the delight of this rather serious salon; an unfortunate calculation had collected here all the fine young people of the Court of the First Consul in 1800, now in 1837 rather melancholy oldsters.

In the past at the Emperor's Court, a Court of parvenus

where the master sought to indicate rank in a fashion incompatible with gaiety and virtually with intellect, Madame Dalvel, wife of a simple lieutenant-general, would have made sure to speak familiarly only to the wife of a marshal, such as the Duchess de Montenotte. Now, however, Countess Dalvel had had the wit to make herself into a celebrated figure of piety, the marshal was long since dead, the ranks had closed.

"What!" said the Duchess de Montenotte to Countess Dalvel, "you dare speak so . . . familiarly to a *real* duchess?"

"Ah, my dear Madame la Maréchale," answered the countess with a laugh, "we are no longer at the Tuileries with the Emperor. The *real* duchess has nothing better to do than to enjoy herself and please others, and if she had other claims upon me, I should not speak to her twice during the entire season."

The Duchess of Montenotte remained stupefied, and may not even yet have understood Madame Dalvel's remark. Such was the mother whom the young duke sought to please, and whom he loved as the only duty he possessed on earth. The duchess's father had been a charcoal merchant at Clamecy. This was the great distress of her life. Moreover, with the exception of her weakness for her title, she had good sense, even a certain amount of wit on important occasions. She was truly fond of all her sons, and passionately loved Leon, the oldest, who really was the least lovable and the most melancholy of all, but he was the duke, and to speak in the fashion of Madame de Montenotte, who had gone to England to study the proper manners of a duchess, he was the *second Duke* de Montenotte.

In this position, though he was rich, his mother, who was even more so and who was believed to have taken possession

of an enormous portfolio upon the first duke's death, sent him every New Year's day a little album magnificently bound with the family arms stamped on both sides of the cover and containing, instead of engravings, some twenty-five thousand-franc banknotes. This periodic present, which for two months constituted the sustenance of all the merchants of the neighbourhood, did not afford an extreme pleasure to the *second Duke* of Montenotte, but managed to enrage the younger brothers, for the most part ruinously in debt.

The following day at five o'clock, Leon was in the Bois de Boulogne. Since entering the École Polytechnique, he had perhaps not found, on the melancholy road of the life our pretentions or our manners have created for a young duke, twenty-four hours comparable to those he had just lived through. All his ideas had been renewed, none had inspired him with either disgust or satiety.

The abbé appeared, the duke addressed him with several sentences of rather studied *politesse,* and then added quite consciously: "I am told that the late Duke de Montmorency, who died in the odor of sanctity on a Good Friday at Saint Thomas Aquinas or at Saint-Valéry, was an ornament to society and indeed a man of considerable wit. I also understand, and far be it from me, Monsieur, to ask you for any elucidation in this regard, that during the discussion of the law of sacrilege in the House of Lords, the honourable duke climbed into his coach at seven in the morning in order to solicit from his noble colleagues the penalty of a severed hand. He believed it was necessary to sever the hand of a man guilty of such a crime before putting him to death on the scaffold; the law had to be amended to this effect . . ."

The abbé's usually motionless and perfectly discreet eyes assumed a singular expression. "I shall ask you for no explanation of this anecdote," the duke continued with a sort

of vivacity, "it matters little to me whether it be true or false, I employ it only as an example, and to express in no uncertain terms that I shall never do such a thing. But up to that point I shall give the solemn promise you were so good as to discuss with me yesterday."

The abbé was pale, and made no answer. First of all his ambition made terrible depredations upon the self-regard of one of the most irascible men in France, one who had most wit when he was in a towering rage. Suddenly he feared that this silence might give a strange weight in the young duke's mind to the objection he had just uttered.

"It would be easy for me to explain to you, my dear duke, the celebrated incident to which you allude, and then its entire aspect would be transformed in your eyes," etc., etc.

The duke noticed that the abbé, generally so impassive, was speaking with much more emphasis and energy than usual, but since he desired to undertake this marriage, he was careful not to sharpen the dispute. The abbé, while saying that he did not seek to return to the incident of the severed hand, informed him that there had been a promise on the part of King Louis XVIII to dispense in all cases with that part of the punishment which therefore became, in the law as written, merely a comminatory threat intended to frighten thieves of the sacred vessels in churches and thereby to prevent a multitude of crimes.

"You must know," he added, "and this is what the irreligious are careful not to say, that the excellent Duke de Montmorency was the bearer in writing of Louis XVIII's pledge always to suspend that punishment."

The abbé, seeing that the young duke had the discretion not to insist, ventured to say that the only histories of the Restoration were those written by the members of the

shameless party, and that no doubt the duke had read one of these histories.

This observation delighted the duke and by its evident absurdity greatly facilitated the negotiation; the young duke had just been made very happy, for the first time in his life he felt a touch of superiority over the abbé, and determined not to be demanding in the remainder of the transaction. "Perhaps after all," he was thinking, "he is in league with my mother, though he has given me his word of honour to the contrary. After all, one is not a priest for nothing." This terminated the benign justification of the severed hand.

After this scabrous moment, which committed the abbé to speaking uninterruptedly for over a quarter of an hour, the negotiation proceeded as if on wheels. The duke gave the solemn promise requested the day before, adding only these words: *in all possible matters,* after the pledge to conduct himself as a good and true Catholic. The abbé added that for the execution of this pledge the duke would never be in communication with any person except himself: after the decease or removal of the Abbé de Miossince, the duke would be in communication with a second person designated by the abbé.

Léon's heart pounded somewhat, as he waited for the name of the person he was to marry. He trembled at the notion of the daughter of some provincial squire reluctant to marry beneath her by an alliance with the son of a young lawyer turned duke and marshal. The duke was quite astonished and indeed charmed when, after the promise had been made, Monsieur de Miossince named *Mina Wanghen,* a Protestant young lady, daughter of a foreign banker. Léon was expecting some administrative family; for some reason he had supposed, with the utter absurdity of a touchy

young man, that this family would be from Toulouse and would have figured in the Calas trial. He was young and carried away with happiness, he had the weakness to express this notion, and the abbé proved to him that Calas had been rightly condemned.*

"You see," the abbé told him, "that the notion of this enterprise came to me quite impromptu yesterday, as you were speaking of your longing to travel. I have no commission from these ladies, indeed I scarcely know them. Our knowledge is based only on my intense desire to bring them into the bosom of the Church, as I have had the happiness to bring the family of the banker Isaac Wentig, now Baron de Vintimille. You realize that this conversion of young Mina is my first duty and my first motive in this entire affair, and that your future influence over the young duchess will be one of my great instruments."

As Leon now became extremely serious upon the utterance of this condition, Monsieur de Miossince reminded him just in time that the future duchess's estates were located in the environs of Königsberg, that there would probably be considerable business to transact, and that certain sales would require his presence in that region . . .

"And my mother, who is reason itself, would approve of my absence . . . Now, my dear benefactor," added the young duke with every appearance of gaiety, "it may be objected that we are already selling our bearskin before we have trapped our bear."

"To which I should reply," the abbé continued, with a

* Jean Calas, a Calvinist of Toulouse, was in 1762 falsely accused of murdering one of his sons for having gone over to the Catholic Church. Tried and condemned, he was broken on the wheel. Voltaire was instrumental in clearing the family's name three years later.

smile as well, "that our entire stake in this matter comes down, so far, to two promenades in the Bois de Boulogne, agreeable though they have been, for me at least, realizing as I do that if Malin-La-Rivoire is looking down on us, he is pleased with his old friend. Now if the duke were with us, he would say--I believe I can hear him: *'Enough of such talk, now to action.'* My young friend, do you go to the British embassy?"

"Yes, on occasion."

"Well, I suggest you go there every Monday. It is likely the Wanghen ladies will be there, if not this first Monday, then the next. Though it is not my wont to be in such places, *I shall make the sacrifice* of appearing there."

This remark was made to connect the somewhat extended harangue on the severed hand to the discussion of the Calas affair, which the abbé was beginning to find awkward; Leon's silence was suspicious to him, for he had not remembered soon enough that the young duke had had a very good teacher of modern history.

"You will recognize Mademoiselle Wanghen with the greatest of ease," the abbé continued, "she is tall and has a lovely figure. Her face is round and her hair chestnut, and her expression is remarkable for its simplicity and kindness! But if a word is spoken which excites her imagination, then upon the instant all this naïveté is replaced by an expression of wit and even of mischievousness. Without being precisely pretty, this face is full of charm."

"And her character, Monsieur de Miossince?"

"Very romantic—romantic in the German fashion, which is to say, to a supreme degree, quite neglecting reality to run after the chimeras of perfection: but after all you are not a petty merchant whose wife will keep the till. What does it

matter to you that your wife is, shall we say, rather extravagant in her ideas, provided she is not tedious? I have seen Mademoiselle Wanghen only some twenty times, perhaps, but I should be very surprised if she ever bores the man who seeks to please her."

"And Madame Wanghen?"

"She almost seems to be her daughter's elder sister, she is a little plump, and she has very high color. Her large black eyes are even finer than those of her daughter, whose name, you will recall, is Mina. Madame Wanghen might be described as a handsome woman still, though she has somewhat irregular teeth. A young woman who is more accustomed to the great world than Madame Wanghen may accompany her, this is a cousin, one Madame von Strombeck, the ruined widow of a noble at the Court of Berlin. She is a little scarred by smallpox, though still young, rather pretty, and lively. These ladies, despite their difference of position, have among themselves the manners of three sisters, it would be difficult to guess, from seeing the two younger ones, that one has seven millions and the other perhaps not even an income of seven hundred."

"That is surely to their credit."

"What is more positive still," the abbé continued, "is that letters from Königsberg written by persons in whom I have the utmost confidence, set Mademoiselle Mina Wanghen's fortune at seven million francs at the very least, of which four million is in land and the rest in a very discreet and highly accredited bank from which, in less than a year, all these funds may be withdrawn. The mother has the use of only two millions. So, my dear Leon, be assiduous at the English evenings. I can of course easily take you to Baron de Vintimille's, but there are two unmarried daughters in the house, and what is more, a devil of a bourgeois mother

who has nothing on her mind but husbands for those daughters. She would not fail to plot and plan forthwith upon the title of duchess for one of them."

"Such mothers and such daughters are indeed my *bête noire!*" exclaimed Leon. "I find them odious."

"When you go to the British, try to dance with Mademoiselle Wanghen. If I am there, I shall take advantage of the circumstances to introduce you to these ladies as simply as I can. In that case, half an hour after the introduction you will vanish. These ladies, I warn you, my young friend, will not be easily taken in by your French wit. They enjoy Paris, but have no blind admiration for all that is done here. I warn you that you will find them very perspicacious. And even so they sometimes say very naïve things, and put questions that are ludicrous to a degree."

"Provided that their absurdities are not like those of our French provinces and the manners of the Parisian mothers who rattle off, with no provocation whatever, tiresome anecdotes to their daughters' imaginary credit, I forgive them anything."

"You will find, buzzing around these ladies, a diplomat, one General von Landek, and any number of impoverished German noblemen who, I believe, have been informed by their correspondents about the dowry of seven millions. And if we do not succeed, my dear duke, your fortune is not so inferior; though less considerable, it is not disparate in comparison with the seven millions of Königsberg—these ladies would have a difficult time finding a better match than you in all of France. It is not a base desire for millions which has brought you into action. And finally, let us not speak of this to a living soul, I do not see what we have to lose if chance should deny us success."

CHAPTER NINE

UPON LEAVING THE ABBÉ, THE YOUNG DUKE WAS in love with Königsberg. He visited all the booksellers to find a "Travels in Prussia," in which quest he was unsuccessful, and finally, that very evening, was obliged to content himself with the article in a geographical dictionary. He went to his club and settled down with the map of Prussia.

The entire evening he spoke no word, and no word of what was spoken to him roused his interest for even a moment.

"Your father, my dear duke," said a general and fellow member, finding him bent over that map of Prussia, "your father made a splendid charge at the battle of Heilsberg, in that angle formed by the ——,* and for eight days the Emperor could speak of nothing but his feat."

"I shall go see that battlefield," Léon said to himself, "if our adventure turns out well, and if I sell a piece of land, it will be to buy another somewhere in the vicinity of Heils-

* A blank in the manuscript.

berg. I'll have a tower built, say 200 feet high, though with no inscription—the local magistrate would not endure it. But I shall tell my mother what I have done, and she will be enchanted."

The day of the British ambassador's ball, Mina Wanghen was constantly surrounded by eight or ten of her compatriots, all disparaging France, all speaking spitefully in German, and mouthing profound sensibility and intimate sentiment. Several attained to a sufficient degree of absurdity to allude quite distinctly to the great pains they had suffered.

"These gentlemen," Mina murmured to her mother, "have not yet learned that sensibility has its own reticence."

"Any man who talks about his love affairs," said Madame von Strombeck, "thereby proves he is ignorant of love and is moved only by vanity."

"Is it not singular," asked Madame Wanghen, "that we should be speaking French to each other? Is that vanity as well?"

"No," replied Mina, "it is a disgust for German and for the feverish sensibility of these gentlemen."

"Ingrate!" exclaimed Madame von Strombeck. "It is for you that these dandies, who must really love Paris, since they contract usurious debts in Prussia to spend half the year here, have spoilt the whole evening boasting of *the German homeland!*"

"In that case," Mina said, "the one who has been most absurd and most rhetorical is the one who loves me the most, and he's the one I'll dance with. Is not Graf von Rechberg the most ardent, the most rhetorical, and the most boring of all, Strombeck?"

"Without a doubt."

"Well, I shall tell him that the excessive heat of the embassy is no longer giving me a headache."

A moment later Mina took part in a quadrille with handsome Graf von Rechberg. He was tall, perfectly proportioned, and splendidly dressed, but according to Mina there was something coarse in the outline of his mouth and in his fashion of walking. "He should be a captain in the grenadiers," she remarked to her mother, who was standing a few feet away from where she was dancing, "and try to get a sabre wound on his forehead; then he might look better."

While dancing with the count, Mina noticed Monsieur de Miossince, and was delighted. "Now there's one reasonable man, at least," she thought, "who will tell us something true, something real, and not exaggerated. And besides I have some questions for him. Yet how strange to see an abbé at a ball, people say that the French priests never come to such things. It is because this one is a man of sense that he carries nothing to excess." A moment later, seeking to meet Monsieur de Miossince's eyes, she saw him giving his arm to a young man wearing a black tie low on the neck and with fine hair very simply dressed. "I wonder if he could be a German?" she thought. Later, she saw this young man dancing, not leaping about but moving very gracefully, all his gestures moderate. "Not a German," she decided.

Mina danced a good deal. An hour later, strolling about the ballroom with her mother, Mina encountered Monsieur de Miossince, who was still speaking to the young man with the striking hair. Monsieur de Miossince approached the ladies, and since his young man stood apart and silent, it suddenly occurred to him to present *Monsieur de Montenotte* to his foreign friends. The abbé had the good taste to make no mention of the title.

"After all he's not a Frenchman," Mina reflected. "The name is Italian."

The newly introduced young man asked her to dance, and while dancing spoke a good deal, which was contrary

to his custom. He told Mina that Monsieur de Miossince had been his father's intimate friend.

As she danced, Mina passed the Vintimille girls, who had only recently been honoured by an invitation to the English embassy balls. Mina found that these young women stared at her with a strange expression. No sooner was she beside her mother again than the Vintimille daughters appeared, led by their own.

"But my dear," they said, all speaking at once, "how do you happen to know the Duke de Montenotte?"

"I know no duke whatever."

"What affectation!" exclaimed the elder daughter, "that young man with whom you were dancing and who was talking so much—that is the young Duke de Montenotte, eldest son of Marshal Malin-la-Rivoire, our famous general who was such a close friend of the Emperor."

"He has a glacial cast of countenance," Mina thought, "for the son of so fierce a warrior. I didn't think that the French could look so cold; he has the reasonable expression of the clerks my father used to praise to us as *cool heads.*"

The Vintimille ladies continued speaking, and the words *duke, duchess, duchy,* recurred continuously. Finally, they stood up and continued their circuit of the room.

"Now we know, down to the last thousand francs," said Frau von Strombeck, "the fortune of this young duke, what he has now, what he will have after the death of his mother the duchess, who is only fifty-five and who moreover is only the daughter of a rich charcoal-merchant from Clamecy. Lord! what petty souls, these Vintimille baronesses!"

"Their conversation," said Mina, "is exactly what you would expect from a chambermaid."

"But why did Monsieur de Miossince, when he introduced this young man to us, fail to mention his title?"

"Lord help us! could he be another suitor?" asked Mina.

"It seems to me that in such a case, one would exaggerate rather than conceal," murmured Frau von Strombeck. "Just look at all these German counts—each one makes some officious friend explain the ancient origins of his title."

"Our good friend Monsieur de Miossince strikes me as an excessively subtle man," said Madame Wanghen. "I still don't know French customs well enough to decide if the omission of this young man's title is an affectation. But if it is, there is certainly a good reason for it."

"In any case," said Mina, "to be so foolish as to submit to a master before turning twenty, I should have to be infatuated with such a future master's merits, and I feel nothing of the kind for this handsome young fellow. He looks like young Buhl," she murmured to her mother (this was her father's favorite undercashier).

"Now my dear, you are unfair. Buhl looks like a dullard, and the duke has the expression, at the very worst, of a man whom nothing excites. Besides, he'll turn up again and let us have another look at him, I suspect, before the ball is over."

This prognostication, however, did not come true. The duke left the moment after he had danced with Mina. He was quite pensive. "They say the first impression is always the surest," he mused. "Well then, this lovely young lady will be an imperious wife." He burst into laughter, deriding himself: "And the land I would buy at Heilsberg, and the tower I would build . . ."

The duke did not complete the remainder of his thought so distinctly, out of respect for his mother, but this thought, or rather this sentiment, was: "And I have had enough of the society of imperious wives."

The fact is that Mina's intellectual superiority, combined with her utter indifference to material things, afforded all

her resolutions an air of extreme decisiveness, which frequently gave her the appearance, the gestures, and the expression of a princess accustomed to being understood and obeyed in the wink of an eye. All the vulgar issues of life were a matter of indifference for this lofty soul, to whom nothing had yet afforded a profound emotion.

In truth, neither she nor anyone else knew what she might someday become, if she ultimately managed to desire or fear something. Hitherto her soul had not deigned to concern itself with ordinary happenings. (She always proceeded, without discussion, on a course which seemed to her a correct one.) By deferential habit, and tender friendship, she left such matters to her mother or even to her cousin Strombeck. This lofty soul took no umbrage at her mother's authority.

"The day will come when I shall be enslaved, and that day will be when I have chosen a husband. How cruel it is for me to have lost my father, so wise a man! First of all, I should be less wealthy; in the second place, his authority would serve to counterbalance that of a husband. Imagine what the latter's influence will be upon two weak women, one of whom will probably be deeply in love with him!"

Hitherto, except for her father's death and her passionate affection for her mother, Mina's soul had not really felt any profound sensation, except as a consequence of the events her imagination proposed to her.

The manuscript includes several "plans," dated May 18, May 21, and May 23, 1837. We reproduce two, that of May 21 from the Del Litto edition, and that of May 23 from the Henri Martineau edition.

May 21—Plan

Love

With suitable feminine wiles, Mina tells the duke: "So long

as there is no question of either love or marriage between us, I am quite disposed to be your friend." The duke finds this amusing. Visiting Mina frequently, he will cease being persecuted by his mother (who is deeply impressed by Mina's seven millions). (In the scene with the abbé: "There have now been four marriages my mother has failed to arrange, I have had enough, to speak frankly.") He comes to visit Mina. She tells him: "You are much too silent, as soon as there are four people in the room. Speak first *ab hoc et ab hac.*" She startles Leon by saying to him: "Egyptian mummies have a fig-wood casing two inches thick. That's what the dukedom is for you, and gradually the casing has become attached to the flesh, and your heart is becoming *lignified.*"

The duke begins to talk, badly at first, then well, then very well . . . Finding himself raised above his ducal horizon, his delighted gaze discovers a vast, gay, new territory. His joy. He becomes another being. "You have produced my metamorphosis," he tells Mina.

He loves her.

She loves him.

Mina is overcome by melancholy, an episode in society leads her to think: "I am easily seduced. Who knows if he loves me?" Unfortunately Leon, in his new eloquence, one day quotes this verse (of Ovid, I think):

*Si vis amari, ama**

This verse convinces Mina: she takes him for a seducer. She gives him an inkstand. "I want it to be splendid, magnificent," she tells the silversmith.

"It is to my interest to make it so, as if for a prince, either of silver or of gold, if you like; but if it is so precious, it will

* Latin: "If you wish to be loved, love."

be stolen and melted down; it is more likely to last if it is made of bronze." Mina has it made of bronze, with a false bottom. In the false bottom, she puts what she has written on the back of a letter from Leon: "Forgive my deception. I am going to tell you an odious falsehood, but a terrible spectre haunts my imagination: to be courted for the millions, etc. (Malcolm's confession in *Macbeth*). I have a child, etc." Mina gives Leon the inkstand. When she speaks of it to Frau von Strombeck, the latter says: "there could be a fire." Mina begs Leon, with inexplicable melancholy, to conceal the inkstand in a thick wall constructed before her eyes in a courtyard. Leon, astounded, has the object immured, etc.

Léon's heart divided. He declares he will marry her nonetheless. Mina's despair: she has promised herself to break with him if he does not refuse her.

She renounces her own promise; she wants to be with Léon as before. Everything is poisoned. Yet Mina's firm character prevails over love. She dismisses Leon whom she adores.

His self-regard is wounded. He consents to the fifth marriage the duchess has arranged. (Arrange what follows in feminine terms, according to appearances.) Mina sees Leon once more. He cannot live without her; she is dying of boredom. He has all his former character with his wife.

"I thought I had some wit of my own. I have none whatever; the fact of the matter is, quite simply, that I loved you and, without you, life is nothing but torture for me."

He sees Mina in secret. She has a sweet consolation amid her distress: she is sure now she will not be married *for the millions.*

"How could you have been willing to marry a girl who had neglected her duty?"

"Would to God she were my wife! However bad a judge I may be of myself and of others, I had nonetheless divined this; even with this great defect, the mother of this child was the only woman in the world."

"Well, then!" Mina tells him, intoxicated with happiness, "go find the inkstand I gave you three months ago. You will find a false bottom in it. And in that false bottom, one of your letters to me, and on the back of that letter, something written in my hand."

Thereupon the duke himself excavates the inkstand. Two hours later he returns delirious with happiness to Mina's lonely street. Mina gives herself to him. The affair explodes in society, *i.e.,* is widely suspected. Baroness de Vintimille attempts to make a scene, to insult Mina—a discreet but significant insult.

Monsieur de Miossince informs Mina. Only one remedy. She abjures.

What happens to Madame Wanghen?

Once one has stooped to crime, there is no holding back. Or rather, for so pure a soul the misery is so great that a new crime is inevitable.

She pays for everything having to do with the new Duchess de Montenotte, who has already presented her husband with a son.

Is what follows horrible?

In any case, the new duchess, cruelly neglected by her husband, takes a lover. She goes to Aix (en Savoie) for the waters, hoping to have a little freedom. Madame and Mademoiselle Wanghen go there too. The Duke goes to Switzerland. He is dying of boredom. He comes to Aix for three days. Mina *pays* the duchess's lover, a ruined and vain fool. *He lets himself be seen leaving the duchess's at midnight—by a gallery giving onto the garden.* Mina has brought the

duke out onto the Guiers Embankment. He wants to challenge the lover.

"What! Dishonour your wife?" Mina says to him, "what nonsense! Promise me to do nothing for three months. I hope that by then you will have sufficient reason to say, like the Duke de Richelieu, 'Ah, Madame, if it had been anyone else!' "

The duke consents.

Then what? (Then continue the plan. Write the chapters while travelling . . .)

MAY 23 PLAN FOR THE ENDING. M. FIOR.

Monsieur de Saint-Maurice, a handsome man of the world of 40, had long been Mme Fauchet's lover. He knows Monsieur Fauchet wants to be rid of his wife, he will offer him, for a consideration of 20,000 francs, all the love letters this unfortunate woman has written him. This done, Monsieur Fauchet, former prefect of Florence, can be rid of his wife.

Mina can offer 100,000 francs to the ruined dullard (who has no merit save that of knowing how to tie his cravat properly) who is the Duchess de Montenotte's lover if he will let himself be surprised in the duchess's arms. The duchess, in all honour, protects him and asks her husband to pardon him.

. . . Mina lies to the duke, telling him that she has had a child by her dancing-master and that she adores this child, which is being wet-nursed at Diepholtz.

In short, Fior suggests: that Mina's fortune be like that of Monsieur de L——. 1 in portfolio: 5 millions; 2 in shipping: 2½ millions.

Pierre Wanghen did not insure his ships. Mina tells the young duke that she is ruined, that storms have destroyed

her ships, that bankruptcies have greatly reduced her portfolio, finally that certain countries (Spain, for instance) are not paying their notes. The duke believes her for a while and says: "It will please me all the more to marry you on that account." Then Frau von Strombeck, by an instinct of garrulity, tells the duke one day when she is alone with him that none of this is the case.

Mina learns this later on, but believes that the duke knew she was lying from the first. Hence her test has *failed.*

If I need things that are *true,* natural, ugly, etc.: Frau von Strombeck imagines the possibility of becoming the duchess by marrying Leon and tries to make Mina quarrel with him.

Mina de Vanghel

Completed early in 1830, *Mina de Vanghel* was published in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* of August 1, 1853 and, the following year, in *Romans et Nouvelles.*

MINA DE VANGHEL WAS BORN IN THE country of philosophy and imagination, in Königsberg. Toward the end of the French campaign, in 1814, the Prussian general Count de Vanghel abruptly left the court and the army. One evening—this was in Craonne, in Champagne, after a murderous battle in which the troops under his orders had wrested a hard-pressed victory—a doubt assailed his mind: *has a people the right to change the innermost and rational manner by which another people seeks to arrange its material and moral existence?* Preoccupied by this great question, the general resolved not to draw his sword again before answering it; he withdrew to his Königsberg estates.

Closely observed by the Berlin police, Count de Vanghel concerned himself only with his philosophical meditations and with his only daughter, Mina. A few years later he died, still a young man, leaving his daughter a huge fortune, a weak mother, and official disgrace, which is no small thing in proud Germany. It is true that, as a lightning rod against this misfortune, Mina de Vanghel bore one of the noblest

names in eastern Germany. She was only sixteen; but already the sentiment she inspired in the young officers who constituted her father's society amounted to veneration and enthusiasm; how they loved the romantic and sombre character which occasionally sparkled in her glance!

A year passed; her mourning came to an end, but her grief over her father's death did not diminish. Madame de Vanghel's friends were beginning to murmur the terrible word *consumption.* Nonetheless, no sooner was this period of mourning past, than Mina was obliged to appear at the court of a sovereign prince to whom she had the honour of being distantly related. As she left for C——, the capital of the Grand Duke's estates, Madame de Vanghel, alarmed by her daughter's romantic ideas and her deep melancholy, hoped that a suitable marriage and perhaps a little love would restore her to the notions befitting her age.

"How I long," she said to her daughter, "to see you married in this country!"

"In this ungrateful country! in a country," her daughter answered mournfully, "where my father, for the price of his wounds and twenty years of dedication, met with nothing but the lowest form of police surveillance! No, I had rather change religion and die a nun in the depths of some Catholic convent!"

Mina knew court life only from the novels of her compatriot Auguste Lafontaine, whose scenes often describe the love affairs of a rich heiress exposed to the seductions of a young colonel, the king's aide-de-camp, a poor head and a good heart. Such an affair, born of money, horrified Mina.

"What is more vulgar and more commonplace," she said to her mother, "than the life of such a couple a year after marriage, when the husband, thanks to his marriage, has become a major-general and the wife a lady-in-waiting to

the hereditary princess! What becomes of their happiness if they should go bankrupt?"

The Grand Duke de C——, who had no idea of the obstacles the novels of Auguste Lafontaine were preparing for him, hoped to keep Mina's vast wealth at his court. Even more unfortunately, one of his aides-de-camp paid court to Mina, perhaps with *higher authorization.* Nothing more was required to determine her to flee Germany. The enterprise was easy enough.

"Mamma," she said to her mother one day, "I want to leave this country and live abroad."

"How you make me tremble when you speak that way! Your eyes remind me of your poor father," replied Madame de Vanghel. "Well, I shall take no sides, nor display my authority; but do not ask me to request the grand duke's ministers for permission to travel abroad."

Mina was extremely unhappy. The successes won by her huge, warm eyes and her distinguished expression rapidly diminished when the court learned that she entertained notions which opposed those of His Serene Highness. More than a year passed in this fashion; Mina despaired of obtaining the indispensable permission. She formed the plan of disguising herself as a man and proceeding to England, where she would live by selling her diamonds. Madame de Vanghel realized with a sort of terror that Mina was undertaking strange experiments to alter the color of her skin. Soon after, she discovered that Mina had ordered man's clothes for herself. Mina observed that on her rides she always encountered some officer of the grand duke; but with the German imagination she had inherited from her father, such difficulties, far from dissuading her from an undertaking, made it even more attractive.

Without realizing it, Mina had won the affection of the

Countess D——; this was the grand duke's mistress, a strange and romantic woman if ever there was one. One day, out riding with her, Mina encountered an officer who began following them at a distance. Vexed by this man, Mina confided her plans for escape to the countess. A few hours later, Madame de Vanghel received a letter written in the grand duke's own hand, granting her an absence of six months in order to take the waters at Bagnères. It was nine o'clock in the evening; by ten, these ladies were on their way, and fortunately by the next morning, before the grand duke's ministers were awake, they had passed the frontier.

It was early in the winter of 182– that Madame de Vanghel and her daughter arrived in Paris. Mina had many successes in the embassy balls. It was said that certain diplomats had orders to see to it, however discreetly, that a fortune of several millions did not become the prey of some French seducer. In Germany, it is still supposed that the young men of Paris are concerned with women.

For all these German imaginings, Mina, who was eighteen, was beginning to have flashes of good sense; she realized that she had failed to make friends with any Frenchwoman. Among all those she met, she encountered extreme politeness, and after six weeks' acquaintance, she was further from friendship than on the first day. In her affliction, Mina imagined that there was something coarse and disagreeable in her manners which paralyzed French urbanity. Never had so much real superiority been observed combined with such modesty. By a piquant contrast, the energy and brusqueness of her decisions were hidden beneath features which still possessed all the naïveté and all the charm of childhood, and this countenance was never spoiled by the more serious expression which heralds the

onset of reason. Reason, it is true, was never the decisive feature of her character.

For all the polite savagery of its inhabitants, Paris delighted Mina. In her own country, she had loathed being greeted in the streets and seeing her carriage recognized; at C——, she saw spies in all the ill-dressed persons who took off their hats to her; the incognito of this republic known as Paris charmed her singular character. In the absence of the warmth of that intimate society which Mina's excessively German heart still regretted, she saw that in Paris, every evening, one can find a ball or some other amusing spectacle to attend. She sought out the house in which her father had lived in 1814, and of which he had spoken so frequently. Once settled in this house, whose tenant she had managed to displace with the greatest of difficulty, Paris was no longer a foreign city to her; Mademoiselle de Vanghel recognized the smallest rooms of this dwelling.

Though his chest was covered with medals and crosses, Count de Vanghel had been, at heart, nothing but a philosopher, a dreamer like Descartes or Spinoza. Mina loved the obscure pursuits of German philosophy and the noble stoicism of Fichte, as a tender heart loves the memory of a splendid landscape. Kant's most unintelligible phrases merely reminded Mina of the sound of her father's voice as he uttered them. What philosophy would not be touching, and even intelligible, with such a recommendation! She managed to persuade several distinguished scholars to give lectures at her house, attended only by herself and her mother.

In the midst of this life—mornings with scholars and evenings at embassy balls—love never touched the rich heiress's heart. The French entertained but did not move her.

"I grant you," she would say to her mother, who praised them to her so often, "they are the most sociable people one

could meet. I adore their brilliant minds, and every day their delicate irony astonishes and amuses me; but do you not find them imitative and ridiculous whenever they attempt to seem moved? Is their emotion ever unaware of itself?"

"Now what is the use of such criticism?" answered the wise Madame de Vanghel. "If you don't enjoy France, let us return to Königsberg; but don't forget that you are nineteen years old, and that I shall not always be with you. It is time for you to think of finding a protector. If I were to die," she added with a melancholy smile, "the Grand Duke de C—— would marry you off to his aide-de-camp."

One fine summer day, Madame de Vanghel and her daughter had gone to Compiègne to watch the king's hunt. The ruins of Pierrefonds, which Mina suddenly happened upon in the depths of the forest, powerfully affected her. Still a slave of German prejudices, all the great monuments to be found in Paris, that *new Babylon,* seemed to her to have something *dry, ironic,* and *nasty* about them.

The ruins of Pierrefonds struck her as touching, like those of the old castles crowning the peaks of the Brocken. Mina persuaded her mother to make a few days' sojourn in the little inn of the village of Pierrefonds. The ladies were abominably lodged there. One day of rain followed the next. Mina, thoughtless as a twelve-year-old, stood under the porte-cochère of the inn, watching the rain fall. She caught sight of a notice-board advertising a property for sale in the vicinity. A quarter of an hour later she arrived at the notary's, guided by a girl from the inn who was holding an umbrella over her head. This notary was indeed astonished to find a young foreigner, so simply dressed, eager to discuss the price of an estate amounting to several hundred thousand francs, then asking him to sign an arrangement for a

deposit and to accept as payment several thousand-franc notes from the Bank of France.

By an accident I shall be careful not to qualify as extraordinary, Mina was cheated only a little. This estate was called Le Petit-Verberie. The seller was one Count de Ruppert, well known in all the chateaux of Picardy. He was a tall, extremely handsome young man; one might admire him at the first encounter, but only a few moments later one felt repelled by something hard and vulgar about him. Count de Ruppert soon claimed to be Madame de Vanghel's friend; he entertained her. Perhaps among the young blades of the period he was the only one who recalled those agreeable roués so fancifully described in the memoirs of Lauzun and Tilly. Monsieur de Ruppert had just dissipated a great fortune; he was imitating the mishaps of the nobles of the age of Louis XIV, and could not imagine how Paris could fail to be exclusively concerned with him. Disappointed in his notions of glory, he had become fanatical about money. An answer to his inquiries in Berlin brought his passion for Mademoiselle de Vanghel to its apogee.

Six months later, Mina was saying to her mother:

"One must really buy property to have friends. Perhaps we might lose a few thousand francs, if we wanted to get rid of Le Petit-Verberie on the instant: but at that price, we now can number a host of agreeable ladies among our intimate acquaintances."

Nonetheless Mina did not adopt the manners of a young Frenchwoman. While admiring their seductive graces, she preserved the naturalness and the freedom of her German ways. Madame de Cély, the most intimate of her new friends, said of Mina that she was *different,* but not singular: a charming grace won forgiveness *for everything;* her glance did not disclose that she possessed millions; she did

not have the *simplicity* of the best society, but a true seduction.

This tranquil life was altered by a thunderbolt: Mina lost her mother. As soon as her grief permitted her an occasion to realize her position, she found it excessively distressing. Madame de Cély had brought her to stay in her chateau.

"You must," this friend, a young woman of thirty, kept telling her, "you must return to Prussia, that is the wisest thing to do; otherwise, you must get yourself married here, as soon as your mourning is over, and meanwhile, you must send straightway to Königsberg for a lady-companion who, if at all possible, is a relative."

There was one great objection: German girls, even the richest ones, believe that one can marry only a man one adores. Madame de Cély enumerated at least ten likely matches; all these young men struck Mina as vulgar, cynical, almost disagreeable. Mina spent the most unhappy year of her life; her health suffered, and her beauty faded almost entirely. One day when she had come to visit Madame de Cély, she was told she would encounter at dinner the celebrated Madame de Larçay: this was the richest and most agreeable person in the countryside; she was often held up as a model for the elegance of her entertainments and the perfectly dignified, agreeable, yet entirely reasonable fashion in which she managed to dispose of a considerable fortune. Mina was astonished by everything she found common and prosaic in Madame de Larçay's character. "So that is what one must become here in order to be admired and loved!"

In her suffering—for the failure of the *beautiful* is a kind of suffering for German hearts—Mina stopped attending to Madame de Larçay and, for politeness's sake, made conversation with her husband, an extremely simple gentleman whose only recommendation was that he had been a page to

the Emperor Napoleon during the Russian retreat and had distinguished himself by a bravery beyond his years in that campaign and the subsequent ones. He spoke very eloquently and very simply of Greece, where he had managed to spend a year or two, fighting for Greek liberty. His conversation pleased Mina; he produced upon her the effect of an intimate friend whom she was seeing again after a long separation.

After dinner, the company visited several famous places in the forest of Compiègne. More than once it occurred to Mina to consult Monsieur de Larçay about the awkward nature of her position. The elegant airs of Count de Ruppert, who that day was following the barouches on his horse, contrasted vividly with Monsieur de Larçay's natural and even naïve manners. The great events among which he had begun his life, revealing to him the truth of the human heart, had helped form an inflexible, cold, positive, even vivacious character, but one quite devoid of imagination. Such natures produce an amazing effect on souls which are imagination entirely. Mina was astounded that a Frenchman could be so simple.

That evening, when he had taken his leave, Mina felt as though she had been separated from a friend who had known all her secrets for many years. Everything struck her as dry and tiresome, even the tender friendship of Madame de Cély. Mina had felt no need to disguise any of her thoughts in the presence of her new friend; the fear of French irony had not compelled her, at every moment, to draw a veil over notions so replete with German frankness. Monsieur de Larçay dispensed with a host of little phrases and gestures required by elegance. This aged him by some eight or ten years, but by the same token he occupied all Mina's thoughts for the first hour which followed his departure.

The following day, it was a strain for her to attend even to Madame de Cély; everything seemed dry and cynical. She no longer regarded as a chimera to be forgotten her secret hope of finding a frank and sincere heart which did not inveterately seek motives for derision in the simplest remark; she was pensive all day long. That evening, Madame de Cély happened to mention Monsieur de Larçay; Mina shuddered and stood up as if she had been called, blushed deeply, and found it difficult to explain her singular impulse. In her disturbance, she could not long disguise from herself what it was crucial to conceal from others. She took refuge in her bedroom. "I am a madwoman," she told herself. At that moment her misery began: it made giant strides; in no time she had reached the stage of remorse. "I am in love, and in love with a married man!" Such was the reproach which agitated her all night long.

Monsieur de Larçay, leaving with his wife to take the waters at Aix-en-Savoie, had forgotten a map on which he had shown the ladies a little detour he was intending to make on his way to that city. One of Madame de Cély's children found this map; Mina snatched it away and escaped into the gardens. Here she spent an hour following the journey planned by Monsieur de Larçay. The names of the villages he would pass through seemed to her noble and singular. She conceived the most picturesque images of their position; she envied the happiness of their inhabitants. This sweet folly was so powerful that it managed to ward off her remorse. A few days later, someone remarked in Madame de Cély's salon that the Larçays had left for Savoie. This news produced a revolution in Mina's mind; she experienced an intense desire to travel.

A fortnight later, a German lady of a certain age arrived at Aix-en-Savoie in a carriage rented at Geneva. This lady

had a chambermaid with whom she seemed so out of temper that Madame Toinod, mistress of the little inn where she had stopped, was scandalized. Madame Cramer, which was the German lady's name, sent for the innkeeper.

"I wish to take into my employ," she announced, "a local girl who knows the *persons* of the city of Aix and its environs; I shall have nothing further to do with this fine young lady whom I was so foolish as to bring with me, and who knows no one here."

"Heavens! Your mistress seems quite out of sorts with you!" Madame Toinod remarked to the chambermaid, as soon as they were alone together.

"Don't mention her to me," said Aniken, tears in her eyes. "What was the reason for making me leave Frankfort, where my parents keep a fine shop? My mother employs the best tailors in town and works from the latest Paris models."

"Your mistress told me she would give you three hundred francs whenever you like, if you would return to Frankfort."

"I would not be received kindly—my mother will never believe that Madame Cramer dismissed me for no good reasons."

"Well, why not stay in Aix? I shall undertake to find you a place. I keep a sort of employment office here; I am the one who furnishes servants to people who come for the waters. It will cost you some sixty francs for your expenses, and out of Madame Cramer's three hundred francs, you will still have a good ten louis d'or in hand."

"There will be a hundred francs for you, instead of those sixty," said Aniken, "if you find me a place with a French family: I want to learn French properly and go to work in Paris. I know how to sew very well, and as a pledge of my intentions, I shall leave with my employers twenty louis d'or which I have brought from Frankfort."

Chance favoured the romantic incident which had already cost Mademoiselle de Vanghel two or three hundred louis. Monsieur and Madame de Larçay reached the Croix-de-Savoie: this is the fashionable hotel. Madame de Larçay found that it was far too noisy, and took lodgings in a charming house at the lake's edge. The spa was quite gay that year; there was a great press of wealthy people, frequent fine balls at which people dressed quite as in Paris, and each evening a great party at the Redoute. Madame de Larçay, dissatisfied with the clumsy maidservants of Aix, wanted the services of a girl who was willing to work. She was advised to call at Madame Toinod's, and there she wasted no time over the local girls, clearly all too inexperienced. At last Aniken was proposed, whose hundred francs had doubled Madame Toinod's natural skill. The young German girl's serious expression delighted Madame de Larçay; she engaged her on the spot and sent for her trunk.

That same evening, after her employers had set off for the Redoute, Aniken dreamily strolled about in the garden on the lake. "At last," she mused, "my great folly is achieved! What will become of me if I am recognized? What would Madame de Cély say, who thinks I have gone back to Königsberg!" The courage which had sustained Mina as long as action had been required was beginning to abandon her. Her soul was suddenly stirred, her breath came fast. Remorse and the fear of being shamed made her deeply unhappy. But then the moon rose behind the mountain of Haute-Combe; its gleaming orb was reflected in the waters of the lake gently stirred by a northern breeze; great white clouds of curious shape rapidly passed across the moon and seemed to Mina like giants. "They come from my country," she told herself. "They want to see me and give me courage, in the singular part I have decided to play." Her attentive

and impassioned gaze followed their swift movements. "Shadows of my ancestors," she breathed to herself, "recognize your own; like you, I have courage. Be not alarmed by the strange costume in which you see me; I shall be loyal to honour. That secret flame of honour and heroism you have transmitted to me finds nothing worthy of itself in the prosaic age where fate has flung me. Will you scorn me because I have given myself a destiny in accord with the fire that burns within?" Mina was no longer unhappy.

A sweet song was audible in the distance; the voice apparently came from the other side of the lake. The fading sounds barely reached Mina's ears, though she was listening closely. Her ideas changed their course, and she fell to pitying her lot. "What does it matter what I try to do? The most I shall achieve is to convince myself that this pure and heavenly soul I had dreamed of really does exist in this world! Even so, it will remain invisible for me. Did I ever speak in the presence of my chambermaid? This wretched disguise will merely expose me to the society of Alfred's servants. He will never deign to speak to me." She wept bitterly. "I shall see him, at least, every day," she suddenly realized, and her courage began to return. ". . . A greater happiness than that was not intended for me . . . My poor mother was right: 'what follies you will commit some day,' she told me, 'if you should ever fall in love!' "

The voice singing across the lake was heard again, but much closer now. Mina realized that it emanated from a boat which she perceived by the movement it communicated to the moon-silvered waves. She distinguished a sweet melody worthy of Mozart. After a quarter of an hour, she forgot all the reproaches she had made to herself, and mused only on the happiness of seeing Alfred every day. "Must not each being," she asked herself at last, "fulfill his fate? Despite

the happy accidents of birth and fortune, it happens that mine is not to shine at some court, or at some ball. I used to attract all eyes, I have seen myself admired—and my tedium, amidst that crowd, turned to the blackest melancholy! Everyone was so eager to speak to me; but I was mortally bored. Since the death of my parents, my only moments of happiness have been those when, without tiresome neighbors, I could listen to Mozart's music. Is it my fault if the search for happiness, natural to all men, leads me to this strange enterprise? Probably it will be to my shame: well, the convents of the Catholic Church will offer me a refuge."

Midnight was chiming in the village steeple on the other side of the lake. This solemn hour made Mina tremble; the moon was no longer high in the sky; Mina went indoors. It was as she leaned on the balustrade of the gallery overhanging the lake and the little garden that Mina, under the vulgar name of Aniken, was awaiting *her master and mistress*. The music had restored her courage. "My ancestors," she told herself, "left their splendid castle in Königsberg in order to go to the Holy Land; a few years later they returned to it, through a thousand dangers, disguised like myself. The courage which animated them flings me into the only dangers which remain within reach of my sex in this childish, tedious, and vulgar age. May I emerge from them with honour, whereupon all generous hearts will perhaps be astonished by my folly, but in secret they will forgive me."

The days passed rapidly and soon found Mina reconciled to her lot. She was obliged to do a good deal of sewing; gaily she assumed the duties of her new condition. Frequently she seemed to be performing in a play: she joked with herself when she inadvertently yielded to some impulse

alien to her role. One day, at the hour of the after-dinner promenade, when a lackey opened the barouche and unfolded the running board, she quickly stepped out first.

"The girl is mad," said Madame de Larçay.

Alfred stared at her closely; he found her quite graceful. Mina was not at all disturbed by notions of *duty* nor by fear of ridicule. Such concepts of *human prudence* were quite beneath her; all the objections she offered herself proceeded only from the danger of inspiring Madame de Larçay with certain suspicions. It had been but six weeks since she had spent a whole day with this lady, and in a very different role.

Every day, Mina got up very early in order to be able to indulge for two hours in the tasks of making herself ugly. Her fine blond hair, which she had so often been told it was impossible to forget, had been done away with by a few snips of the scissors; thanks to a chemical preparation, her remaining locks had assumed a disagreeable and mingled tint, tending toward a dark chestnut. A mild decoction of ivy leaves applied each morning to her delicate hands gave them the appearance of a coarse skin. Each morning, too, that fresh complexion took on some of the unpleasant shades the White Men bring back from the colonies when their blood has had some intimacy with the Negro race. Content with her disguise, which made her in fact excessively plain, Mina hoped to avoid having ideas of too remarkable a sort. Absorbed in her happiness, she had no desire to speak. Placed near a window in Madame de Larçay's bedroom and busy arranging gowns for the evening, twenty times a day she would hear Alfred speaking and found new occasions to admire his character. Shall we dare say it? . . . Why not, since we are portraying a German heart. There were moments of felicity and of exaltation

when Mina reached the point of imagining that he was a supernatural being. The sincere zeal with which she performed her new functions had its natural effect on Madame de Larçay, who was a mediocre soul: she treated Mina with hauteur, and as a poor girl who was only too happy to be granted employment.

"Everything which is sincere and truly alive will be forever out of place among such people," Mina told herself. She let it be understood that she hoped to return to Madame Cramer's good graces. Almost every day she asked for permission to visit her.

Mina had feared that her behavior might give Madame de Larçay some strange ideas; she was delighted to realize that her new mistress saw her as nothing but a girl less skillful with her needle than the chambermaid she had left behind in Paris. Monsieur Dubois, Alfred's valet, was more troublesome. He was a Parisian of some forty years and a well-groomed appearance, who believed it was one of his duties to court his new colleague. Aniken encouraged him to talk and realized that fortunately his only true passion was to accumulate a fortune large enough to enable him to open a café in Paris. Then, without embarrassment, she began giving him presents. Soon Dubois served her with as much respect as he showed Madame de Larçay herself.

Alfred noticed that this young German girl, so clumsy and timid at times, had manners quite out of keeping with her position, and ideas of a delicacy and finesse which made her worth listening to. Mina, seeing in his eyes that he was listening to her words, allowed herself certain delicate and penetrating reflections, especially when she hoped not to be overheard or at least understood by Madame de Larçay.

If, during the first two months Mademoiselle de Vanghel spent at Aix, a philosopher had asked her what her purpose

was, the childishness of the answer would have amazed him, and the philosopher would have suspected a certain amount of hypocrisy. Continually to see and hear the man she was head over heels in love with was the sole purpose of her life: she desired nothing else, she was too happy to think of the future. If the philosopher had told her that such love might cease being so pure, he would have angered more than surprised her. Mina was studying with delight the character of the man she adored. It was especially in contrast with the high society in which fortune and the position of his father, a member of the Upper Chamber, had placed him, that the tranquil Larçay's character shone. Had he lived among bourgeois folk, the simplicity of his manners, his horror of affectation and grand airs would have revealed him, in their eyes, as a man of utter mediocrity. Alfred never sought to say witty things. This habit was what, on the first day, had most contributed to awaken Mina's close attention. Seeing the French through her country's prejudices, she found that their conversation always seemed to be the end of a comic song. Alfred had seen enough distinguished people in his life to be able to produce a certain amount of wit from memory; but he would have avoided as something vile uttering merely amusing phrases which he himself had not made up on the spur of the moment, and which one or another of his hearers might have known quite as well as he.

Each evening, Alfred drove his wife to the Redoute and then returned home to indulge his passion for botany which the nature of the place had inspired in him, for it was here that Jean-Jacques Rousseau had spent his youth. Alfred kept his boxes and plants in the salon where Aniken would do her sewing. Each evening, they would find themselves alone together for hours at a time, without, on either side, a word

being spoken. Both were embarrassed and yet happy. Aniken had no other attentions for Alfred beyond that of dissolving a little glue in water so that he could paste dried plants into his herbal, and she permitted herself even this indulgence only because it might pass as part of her duties. When Alfred was not there, Mina admired these lovely plants he brought back from his excursions into the picturesque foothills around the Lac du Bourget. She herself was soon affected by a sincere love of botany. Alfred found this convenient and soon quite singular. "He loves me," Mina said to herself, "but I have just seen what success my enthusiasm for the functions of my condition have enjoyed with Madame de Larçay."

Madame Cramer pretended to fall ill; Mina sought and obtained permission to spend her evenings with her former mistress. Alfred was astonished to find his interest in botany diminishing and virtually disappearing; he remained the whole evening at the Redoute, and his wife teased him about his inability to endure solitude. Alfred admitted to himself that he had developed a liking for the girl. Vexed by the timidity he felt in her presence, he had a moment of fatuity: "Why not behave as one of my friends would? After all, she is only a chambermaid."

One evening, when it was raining, Mina remained in the house. Alfred put in no more than a token appearance at the Redoute. When he returned home, Mina's presence in the salon seemed to surprise him. This little false note, which Mina noticed, deprived her of all the happiness she had promised herself for that evening. It was perhaps to this mood that she owed the veritable indignation with which she repulsed Alfred's advances. She withdrew to her own room. "I have been deceived," she told herself, in tears.

"These Frenchmen are all the same." During the night, she was on the verge of returning to Paris.

The next morning, the scornful expression with which she gazed at Alfred was not simulated. Alfred was stung. He paid no further attention to Mina, and spent all his evenings at the Redoute. Without suspecting it, he had made the right move. This coldness caused the plan of a return to Paris to be forgotten: "I am running no danger at this man's hands," Mina decided, and eight days had not passed before she felt she had forgiven this little revival of the French character. For his part, Alfred realized, from the boredom he experienced among the ladies at the Redoute, that he was more in love than he had imagined. Yet he persisted in his indifferent behaviour. In truth his eyes followed Mina with pleasure, and he would occasionally speak to her, but no longer returned to his lodgings in the evenings. Mina was wretched; almost without realizing it, she ceased to undertake, every morning, the toilette intended to make herself homely. "Am I dreaming?" Alfred wondered. "Aniken is becoming one of the loveliest creatures I have ever seen." One evening when he had returned home by the merest chance, he was led on by his feelings, and asked Aniken's forgiveness for having treated her so frivolously.

"I realized," he told her, "that you were inspiring in me an interest I had never felt for anyone; I was alarmed, I sought to cure myself or to break off with you, and ever since I have been the most unhappy man on earth."

"Ah! how happy you have made me, Alfred!" exclaimed Mina, in ecstasy.

They spent this evening and those that followed in admitting that they loved each other madly, and promising to be chaste forever.

Alfred's discreet character was hardly given to the cultivation of illusions. He knew that lovers discover singular perfections in those they love. The treasures of wit and delicacy he was discovering in Mina convinced him that he was truly in love. "Is it possible that this is a mere illusion?" he asked himself every day, and he compared what Mina had said to him the evening before to what the women of the society he found at the Redoute were saying. For her part, Mina felt that she had been on the point of losing Alfred. What would have become of her, had he continued to spend his evenings at the Redoute? Far from attempting to play the part of an ordinary chambermaid any longer, she had never in her life made such efforts to please. "Should I tell Alfred who I am?" she wondered. "His eminently prudent mind will certainly reprove such a folly, even if it has been undertaken for his sake. Moreover," she went on, "my fate must be decided here. If I mention Mademoiselle de Vanghel, whose estates are some leagues from his own, he will be sure to meet me again in Paris. No, on the contrary, the prospect of never seeing me again must determine him to take the strange steps which are, alas! essential to our happiness. How will this discreet man persuade himself to change his religion, divorce his wife, and come and live as my husband on my splendid estates in eastern Prussia?" That great word *illegitimate* did not occur to Mina as an insurmountable barrier to her new projects; she imagined she was not departing from the path of virtue, because she would not have hesitated to sacrifice her life a thousand times over in order to serve Alfred.

Gradually Madame de Larçay became explicitly jealous of Aniken. The singular transformation of the girl's countenance had not eluded her; she attributed it to extreme coquetry. Madame de Larçay might have dismissed the

creature straightway, but her friends pointed out that she must not give such importance to a whim: what must be avoided was Monsieur de Larçay's bringing Aniken to Paris.

"Be discreet," she was told, "and your distress will come to an end with the season here at the spa."

Madame de Larçay had Madame Cramer watched, and tried to convince her husband that Aniken was merely an adventuress who, pursued by justice in Vienna or Berlin for some action reprehensible in the eyes of the law, had gone into hiding here in Aix, and was probably awaiting the arrival of some commercial profiteer, her associate. This notion, presented as a likely conjecture though one not important enough to investigate, cast a shadow over Alfred's mood. It was obvious to him that Aniken was not a chambermaid; but what serious interest could have forced upon her the wretched part she was playing? It could only be fear.

Mina readily guessed the cause of the disturbance she saw in Alfred's gaze. One evening, she was imprudent enough to question him; he acknowledged how matters stood, Mina was confused, and speechless. Alfred was so close to the truth that at first she had a great deal of difficulty defending herself. The false Madame Cramer, faithless to her role, had suggested that financial interests mattered little to her. In her despair over the effect she saw Madame Cramer's remarks producing on Alfred's soul, she was on the point of telling him who she was. Apparently the man who loved Aniken to madness would also love Mademoiselle de Vanghel; but Alfred would be sure to see her again in Paris, where she could not obtain the sacrifices necessary to her love!

It was in these mortal uncertainties that Mina spent the day. It was the evening which would be difficult to get through. Would she have the courage, alone again with Alfred, to resist the melancholy she read in his eyes, to allow

an only too natural suspicion to weaken or even destroy his love for her? That evening, Alfred drove his wife to the Redoute and did not return. There was a masked ball that evening, a great deal of noise, and a great crowd. The streets of Aix were crowded with carriages belonging to curiosity-seekers from as far away as Chambéry and even Geneva. All this ostentation of public merriment redoubled Mina's melancholy. She could not remain in that salon where, for several hours, she had vainly awaited this too-beloved man who did not come. She sought refuge with her companion. Here, too, she found misfortune; this woman coldly asked her permission to leave her, adding that though poor indeed, she could no longer bring herself to take the scarcely honourable role in which she had been placed. Far from having a character appropriate to prudent decisions, in extreme situations Mina required only a word in order to represent to herself an entire situation of life under a new aspect. "Indeed," she observed, struck by her companion's observation, "my disguise is no such thing for anyone, and I have lost honour. No doubt I pass for an adventuress. Since I have surrendered everything for Alfred," she soon added, "I am mad to deprive myself of the happiness of seeing him. At least at the ball I can watch him to my heart's content, and study his soul."

She ordered masks and dominoes; she had brought from Paris some diamonds which she put on, either to disguise herself more completely in Alfred's eyes or to distinguish herself from the host of masks and perhaps persuade him to speak to her. Mina appeared at the Redoute on her companion's arm, intriguing everyone by her silence. At last she saw Alfred, who seemed to her extremely sad. Mina never took her eyes from him and was happy, when a voice murmured in her ear:

"Love recognizes Mademoiselle de Vanghel's disguise."

She trembled and turned around: it was Count de Ruppert. She could not have made a more disastrous encounter at this time.

"I recognized your diamonds, those are Berlin settings," he said to her. "I've just come from Toeplitz, from Spa, from Baden: I've hunted for you in every watering-place in Europe."

"If you say one more word," Mina told him, "I shall never see you again. Tomorrow night, at seven, be opposite the house at number 17, Rue de Chambéry."

"How am I to keep Monsieur de Ruppert from disclosing my secret to his intimate friend Larçay?" This was the great problem which plunged Mina into the most painful agitation all night long. Several times, in her despair, she was on the point of ordering her horses and leaving on the spot. "But for the rest of his life Alfred will believe that this Aniken he so loved was only some unworthy person fleeing in disguise the consequences of her wicked actions. Moreover if I escape without seeing Monsieur de Ruppert, despite his respect for my fortune, he is quite capable of divulging my secret. But if I stay, how can I ward off Monsieur de Ruppert's suspicions? What scheme to devise?"

At the same masked ball where Mina had made so unfortunate an encounter, all those mindless gentlemen, taking the waters to divert their boredom, surrounded Madame de Larçay as was their custom. Hesitating over what sorts of things to say this evening, since the commonplaces suitable to a salon are no longer appropriate for a masked ball, they alluded to the beauty of her German chambermaid. There was even, among them, one fool bolder than the rest who indulged himself in several indelicate observations concerning the jealousy they attributed to Madame de Larçay. One

absolutely coarse masker challenged her to take revenge on her husband by accepting a lover; this remark produced an explosion in the mind of a highly prudent woman accustomed to the halo of flatteries with which a high position and a great fortune had surrounded her life.

The day after the ball, there was a promenade along the lake. Mina was free to visit Madame Cramer, where she received Monsieur de Ruppert. He had not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"Great misfortunes which have altered my position," Mina told him, "have led me to grant your love some justice. Would you be willing to marry a widow?"

"Then you were secretly married!" said the count, turning pale.

"How could you have failed to guess?" Mina answered, "when you found me refusing you—you and some of the greatest matches in France?"

"A singular character—but admirable!" the count exclaimed, trying to conceal his stupefaction.

"I am united to a man unworthy of me," Mademoiselle de Vanghel continued, "but I am a Protestant, and my religion, which I should be happy to see you adopt, permits me to divorce. Yet do not suppose that at this moment I can feel love for anyone, even for a man who would inspire me with the greatest esteem and confidence: I can offer you only friendship. I long to remain in France; who can forget this country, once one has known such a sojourn? I need a protector. You have a great name, a splendid intellect, everything which affords a fine position in the world. A great fortune can make your mansion the first in Paris. Will you obey me like a child? At this price, but at this price alone, I shall offer you my hand in a year."

During this long speech, Count de Ruppert was calculat-

ing the effects of an adventure disagreeable to sustain, but nonetheless compensated with a great fortune, and after all with a really fine woman. It was quite gracefully that he pledged obedience. He attempted every form of speech in order to penetrate her secrets.

"Your efforts will be futile," she answered with a laugh. "Will you have the courage of a lion and the docility of a child?"

"I am your slave," the count replied.

"I live hidden in the vicinity of Aix, but I know all that is happening here. In eight or nine days, watch the lake at the moment when midnight chimes in the parish steeple: you will see a flare floating on the waves. The next day, at nine in the evening, I shall be here, and I permit you to come. Speak my name, utter a word to anyone, and you will never see me again in your life."

After the promenade along the lake, during which, and more than once, some mention had been made of Aniken's beauty, Madame de Larçay returned to her residence in a state of irritation quite alien to her dignified and temperate character. She began with a few extremely harsh words to Mina which pierced the girl's heart, for they were spoken in Alfred's presence and he did not come to her defense. She replied, for the first time, in a sharp manner. Madame de Larçay believed she perceived in this tone the assurance of a young woman who is led by the love she inspires to forget herself, and her anger knew no bounds. She accused Mina of making assignations with certain persons at Madame Cramer's, who despite the fiction of an apparent quarrel, was only too evidently in league with her.

"Has that monster de Ruppert already betrayed me?" Mina wondered.

Alfred stared at her fixedly, as though to discover the

truth. The lack of delicacy in his gaze gave her the courage of despair: she coldly denied the calumny with which she was charged and added not another word. Madame de Larçay dismissed her on the spot. At two in the morning, Mina asked the faithful Dubois to accompany her to Madame Cramer's. Locking herself in her room, Mina shed tears of rage, thinking how few were the means of vengeance left to her by the strange position she had taken. "Ah, would it not be better to abandon everything and return to Paris? What I have undertaken is beyond my powers! But Alfred will have no other memory of me than scorn: all his life Alfred will despise me," she added, dissolving in tears. She realized that with this cruel notion which would not leave her, she would be even more wretched in Paris than in Aix. "Madame de Larçay slanders me; God knows what is said of me at the Redoute! And these observations, made by everyone and his brother, will utterly ruin me in Alfred's mind. How would a Frenchman manage not to think what *everyone* thinks? He was quite capable of hearing such things uttered, in my very presence, without contradicting them, without addressing a single remark to me in consolation! But then—do I still love him? Are not the dreadful impulses tormenting me now the last agonies of this unfortunate love? It is vile not to seek revenge!" Such was Mina's last thought.

As soon as it was daylight, she sent for Monsieur de Ruppert. As she waited for him, she walked back and forth, in great agitation, in the garden. Gradually a splendid summer sun rose and illuminated the smiling hills around the lake. This joyous nature but redoubled Mina's fury. At last Monsieur de Ruppert appeared. "What an idiot!" Mina thought to herself as she saw him approach. "And now I must let him speak for an hour, at least."

She received Monsieur de Ruppert in the salon, and her lustreless eyes counted the minutes by the clock. The count was enchanted; for the first time this little foreign creature listened to him with the attention his sentiments deserved.

"At least you are convinced of my feelings?" he was saying to Mina as the minute hand reached the numeral which completed her hour of patience.

"Avenge me."

"What must I do?"

"Seduce Madame de Larçay, and make sure her husband is well aware that she is deceiving him, so that there can be no doubt in his mind. Then he will repay her for the miseries with which this woman's calumnies have poisoned my life."

"Yours is a dreadful plan," said the count.

"You mean it is difficult to execute," Mina answered with an ironic smile.

"Not difficult—no, not for me," replied the count, stung. "I shall destroy this woman's reputation," he added with a frivolous expression. "A pity, she was a fine figure of a woman."

"Take care, Monsieur, I have no intention of compelling you to please Madame de Larçay to any real extent. I merely desire that her husband have no doubt that you please her."

The count took his leave; Mina was less wretched. To take revenge is to act, and to act is to hope. "If Alfred dies," she said to herself, "I shall die!" And she smiled. The happiness she felt at this moment separated her from virtue forever. The ordeal of that night had been too great for her character; she was not prepared to find herself slandered in Alfred's presence, and to see him put faith in the slander. Henceforth she might still utter the word virtue, but she would be deluding herself; her heart was entirely filled by vengeance and by love.

Mina formed the whole plan of her revenge in her mind; could it be executed? This was the only doubt which offered itself to her. She had no other means of action than the devotion of a fool and a great deal of money.

Monsieur de Larçay appeared. "What are you doing here?" Mina asked haughtily.

"I am an unhappy man, and I have come to weep with the best friend I have in the world."

"What! And your first word is not that you reject the slander pronounced against me! Leave!"

"It is to answer false imputations," Alfred replied with dignity, "to tell you as I do that I can conceive of no happiness without you. Aniken, don't be angry," he added, with tears in his eyes. "Find a reasonable means of uniting us and I am ready to do anything. Command me, but rescue me from the abyss into which chance has flung me; myself, I see no way . . ."

"Your presence here makes all of Madame de Larçay's slanders true; leave me, and do not attempt to see me again."

Alfred withdrew more in anger than in pain.

"He finds nothing to say to me," Mina mused; she was in despair; she was virtually obliged to despise the man whom she adored. "What! he could find no means of being with her! And he was a man, a soldier! She, a mere girl, had found, since she had loved him, a means, and a terrible means, the disguise which would dishonour her forever, if it were divined! . . . But Alfred had said: *'Command me, find a reasonable means . . .'* " There must have been a little remorse left in Mina's soul, for these words comforted her: then she had the power to take action. "Yet," the devil's advocate resumed, "yet Alfred said nothing like 'I don't believe the slander.' And indeed, though my folly may well

have exaggerated the difference between the manners of France and of Germany, I don't really resemble a chambermaid. In that case, why does a girl my age come disguised to a watering-place? As he is . . . I can no longer be happy with anyone else. 'Find a way to unite us,' he said, 'I am ready to do anything.' He is weak, and assigns me the burden of our happiness. I shall assume that burden," Mina determined, as she stood up and strode in agitation round the salon. "Let us see first if his passion can resist absence, or if he is a man to be despised on every point, a true child of irony. Then Mina de Vanghel will manage to forget him."

An hour later, she left for Chambéry, which is only a few leagues from Aix.

Alfred, though not much inclined to religion, found that it was in poor taste to have none. Upon arriving in Chambéry, Madame Cramer engaged a young Genevan, studying to be a Protestant minister, to come every evening and explicate the Bible to her and to Aniken, whom she henceforth, out of friendship and in order to be forgiven for her former anger, called her niece. Madame Cramer took lodgings at the best inn, and nothing was easier to explain than her behaviour. Believing she was ill, she had summoned the finest physicians in the town, whom she paid extremely well. Mina consulted them on occasion with regard to an affection of the skin which occasionally dimmed her complexion and gave her the colouring of a quadroon.

The companion began to be much less scandalized by the name of Cramer she had promised to assume and by all of Mademoiselle de Vanghel's behaviour; she quite simply believed her to be mad. Mina had hired Les Charmettes, a country house in an isolated valley a quarter of an hour from Chambéry, where Jean-Jacques Rousseau declares that

he spent the happiest moments of his life. The writings of this author constituted her only comfort. One day she had a moment of delicious happiness. At the turn of a path, in the little wood of chestnut-trees opposite the modest structure of Les Charmettes, she found Alfred. She had not seen him for fifteen days. He suggested, with a timidity which enchanted Mina, that she leave Madame Cramer's service and accept a small allowance from him. "You would have a chambermaid, instead of being one yourself, and I should never see you except in the presence of such a chaperon." Aniken refused for religious motives. She told him that Madame Cramer was now extremely good to her and seemed to repent of the behaviour she had shown upon arriving in Aix.

"I remember very well," she ended by saying to him, "the slander of which I was the object on Madame de Larçay's part; it has constituted a duty for me to ask you, here and now, not to return to Les Charmettes."

A few days later, she went to Aix; she was very pleased with Monsieur de Ruppert. Madame de Larçay and her new friends were taking advantage of the fine weather to make excursions in the neighbourhood. During a pleasure-party these ladies made to Haute-Combe (an abbey located on the other side of the Lac du Bourget, opposite Aix, and which is the Saint-Denis of the dukes of Savoie), Monsieur de Ruppert, who according to Mina's instructions had not sought out Madame de Larçay's company, was noticed wandering in the woods surrounding Haute-Combe. Madame de Larçay's friends were greatly concerned with this act of timidity in a man known for his boldness. It seemed clear to them that he had conceived a grand passion for her. Dubois informed Mina that his master was living in the blackest melancholy.

"He regrets the company he once so enjoyed and," Dubois

added, "he has another reason for disappointment. Who would have thought it of so prudent a gentleman? Monsieur the Count de Ruppert is causing him jealousy!"

This jealousy amused Monsieur de Ruppert. "Will you allow me," he asked Mademoiselle de Vanghel, "to have this poor Larçay intercept an impassioned letter I shall write to his wife? Nothing will be so amusing as her denials, if he insists on speaking to her about it."

"All in good time," Mina replied. "But above all," she continued in a harsh tone of voice, "be careful to have nothing to do with Monsieur de Larçay—no duel; if he should die, I shall never be yours."

She immediately regretted the severe tone of voice in which she had spoken these words, and applied herself to being forgiven for them. She realized that Monsieur de Ruppert had not perceived the harshness of the remark that had escaped her, and her disdain for him was increased. Monsieur de Ruppert told her that perhaps Madame de Larçay might not have been altogether insensible to his attentions; but to entertain himself, while paying her the most assiduous court, he had been very careful, whenever he had occasion to speak to her in private, to utter only the most indifferent remarks and to make the most neutral observations.

Mina was pleased with this conduct. It was in this character, which with some appearances of reason was in fact its contrary, that she only half despised him. She boldly consulted Monsieur de Ruppert as to a considerable investment she wished to make, with regard to her French income, and showed him letters from her financial adviser in Königsberg and her banker in Paris. She noticed that the sight of these letters kept him from making a remark which she did not wish to hear: on her interest in Monsieur de Larçay.

"What a difference!" she mused while Monsieur de Rup-

pert gave her long descriptions of how she might best invest her money. "And there are people who consider the count to have more wit and more sensibility than Alfred! O nation of coarse souls! O nation of playactors! How the tender bonhomie of my good Germans would please me now, were it not for the sad necessity of appearing at a court and of marrying the king's favorite aide-de-camp!"

Dubois came to tell her that Alfred had intercepted a singular letter addressed to Madame de Larçay by the Count de Ruppert; Alfred had shown it to his wife, who had claimed that this letter was nothing but a bad joke. Hearing this account, Mina was no longer able to control her anxiety. Monsieur de Ruppert could play every part except that of an overly patient man. She suggested that he come and spend a week at Chambéry; he showed little eagerness to do so.

"I am engaged in absurd undertakings; I write a letter which can make me the butt of spiteful tongues; at least I do not have to appear to be trying to hide!"

"That is precisely what you must do—you must hide," Mina retorted haughtily. "Are you willing to avenge me or not? I do not want Madame de Larçay to owe the happiness of her widowhood to me."

"You would prefer, I imagine, that her husband be the widower!"

"And what is that to you?" There ensued a lively scene with Monsieur de Ruppert, who left her in a rage; but he apparently reflected on the unlikelihood of a slander being invented on his account—or one from which he would have much to fear. His vanity reminded him that his bravery was widely known. In a single stroke he might repair all the follies of his youth and in a single moment conquer a splendid position in Parisian society; this was worth more than a duel.

The first person whom Mina saw again at Les Charmettes, the day after her return from Aix, was Monsieur de Ruppert. His presence reassured her, but that very evening she was deeply troubled: Monsieur de Larçay had come to see her.

"I am seeking neither an excuse nor a pretext," he said with great simplicity. "I cannot endure a fortnight without seeing you, and yesterday was the fifteenth day . . ."

Mina too had counted the days; never had she felt so strongly drawn toward Alfred, but she trembled at the possibility of his engaging in a duel with Monsieur de Ruppert. She did everything in her power to obtain his confidences on the subject of the intercepted letter. She found him preoccupied, but he said nothing to her about the matter; she could obtain nothing but these words: "I have suffered a deep disappointment," he said at last. "It has nothing to do with ambition, or with money, and the most evident effect of my unfortunate position is to intensify my passionate friendship for you. What casts me into despair is that duty has no empire over my heart. There is nothing for it, I cannot live without you."

"And I shall never live without you," she said, taking his hand and covering it with kisses, and at the same time preventing him from putting his arms around her. "Try to safeguard your life, for I shall not survive you by one hour."

"Ah, you know all!" Alfred replied, and with evident pain he managed to say nothing more.

The day after his return to Aix, a second anonymous letter informed Monsieur de Larçay that during his last expedition in the mountains (this was the occasion he had taken to visit Chambéry), his wife had received Monsieur de Ruppert at home. The anonymous correspondent concluded thus: "Tonight, around midnight, Monsieur de R—— is to be received. I am only too aware that I cannot inspire you with

confidence of any sort; therefore do not behave foolishly. Do not indulge your anger, if anger is what you feel, until you have seen for yourself. If I am mistaken, and if I am deceiving you, you will have endured no more than a night spent in some hiding-place near Madame de Larçay."

Alfred was deeply disturbed by this letter. A moment later, he received a note from Aniken: "We have arrived in Aix; Madame Cramer has just gone to her room. I am free; come."

Monsieur de Larçay decided that before concealing himself in the garden of his own house, he had time to spend ten minutes with Aniken. He arrived at her lodgings extremely troubled. This night, which had already begun, would be as decisive for Mina as for him; but she was calm. To all the objections her reason made, she had the same answer: death.

"You are silent," Mina said to him, "but it is clear that something extraordinary is happening to you. You were not to give me the pain of seeing you. But since you have come after all, I want to remain with you the whole evening." Contrary to Mina's expectation, Alfred consented to remain without raising any difficulty. In decisive circumstances, a powerful mind radiates a kind of magnanimity which is happiness.

"I am going to engage in the foolish role of the jealous husband," Alfred said to her at last. "I am going to hide myself in my own garden; this is, I believe, the least painful way of dispelling the wretchedness into which an anonymous letter has just plunged me." And he showed it to her.

"What right have you," Mina asked him, "to dishonour Madame de Larçay? Are you not in a condition of evident separation? You abandon her and renounce the privilege of

keeping her soul occupied: you leave her quite barbarously to the tedium natural to a woman of thirty, rich and without occupation of any kind: has she not the right to beguile her tedium? And it is you who tell me you love me, you who are more of a criminal than she, for before she did so, you violated your conjugal bond, and now you are a madman: it is you who seek to condemn her to an eternal ennui!"

This way of thinking was too lofty for Alfred; but the tone of Mina's voice gave him a certain strength. He admired the power she had over him, he was spellbound by it. "So long as you deign to keep me with you," he said to her at last, "I shall not know that tedium of which you speak."

At midnight, all had long since become tranquil on the shores of the lake; a cat's paws would have been audible. Mina had followed Alfred behind one of those hedgerows still used to border the gardens of Savoie. All of a sudden a man leaped down from a wall into the garden. Alfred made as if to run toward him; Mina seized him and held him back. "What will you learn if you kill him?" she whispered. "And suppose it were only a thief, or the lover of some woman other than your wife, how terrible your regret to have killed him!"

Alfred had recognized the count; he was in a transport of rage. Mina had the greatest difficulty in restraining him. The count took a ladder hidden at the base of a wall, leaned it against a wooden gallery which ran along the upper floor eight or ten feet above ground. One of the windows of Madame de Larçay's bedroom gave onto this gallery. Monsieur de Ruppert entered the apartment by a window of the salon. Alfred rushed to a little door on the ground floor that opened onto the garden; Mina followed him. For a few

seconds she delayed the moment when he could seize a tinderbox and light a candle. She even managed to take his pistols from him.

"Would you awaken everyone living on all the other floors of this house? That would be a fine piece of tittle-tattle for tomorrow morning! Even at the moment of a vengeance I regard as an absurdity, would it not be better that an idle and wicked audience not learn of the offence at the same time as the vengeance?"

Alfred advanced as far as the door of his wife's room. Mina followed him still: "A fine thing, if in my very presence you had the courage to abuse your wife!"

Having reached the door, Alfred flung it open. He saw Monsieur de Ruppert escaping in his nightshirt behind Madame de Larçay's bed, she being at the other end of the room. Monsieur de Ruppert was six feet ahead of her; he had time to open the window and leap out onto the wooden gallery, and from the gallery down into the garden. Monsieur de Larçay followed rapidly; but at the moment he reached the retaining wall which separated the garden from the lake, the boat in which Monsieur de Ruppert was escaping was already five or six yards from shore.

"Till tomorrow, Monsieur de Ruppert!" shouted Monsieur de Larçay. There was no reply. Monsieur de Larçay ran back up the stairs to his wife's room. He found Mina prowling back and forth in the little salon in front of the bedroom. She stopped him as he passed. "What do you suppose you are going to do now? Murder Madame de Larçay? With what right? I shall not endure it. If you do not give me your dagger, I shall raise my voice and warn her to escape. It is true that my own presence here compromises me cruelly in the eyes of your people."

Mina saw that her words were having an effect. "You

love me, yet you are willing to dishonour me!" she added vehemently.

Monsieur de Larçay flung his dagger at her feet and furiously rushed into his wife's bedroom. The scene was an intense one. Madame de Larçay, utterly innocent, supposed she had been visited by a thief; she had neither seen nor heard Monsieur de Ruppert. "You must be mad," she finally hissed at her husband, "and would to God you were only a madman! You apparently desire a separation. You shall have one. At least be discreet enough to say nothing. Tomorrow I shall return to Paris; I shall let it be known that you are travelling in Italy, where I had no desire to follow you."

"When do you plan to fight the duel tomorrow morning?" Mademoiselle de Vanghel asked, when she saw Alfred again.

"What are you saying?" Monsieur de Larçay replied.

"It is no use trying to deceive me. I insist that before you seek out Monsieur de Ruppert, you give me your hand to help me into a boat; I want to go for a row on the lake. If you are fool enough to let yourself be killed, the waters of the lake will put an end to my miseries."

"Now Aniken dear, make me happy tonight. Tomorrow, perhaps, this heart which, since I have known you, has throbbed only for you, as well as this charming hand which I am pressing to my bosom, will belong to corpses lit by tapers and guarded in some church corner by two Savoyard priests. This splendid day is the supreme moment of our lives—let it be the happiest as well."

Mina had the greatest of difficulties resisting Alfred's transports. "I shall be yours," she said at last, "but only if you live. At this moment, such a sacrifice would be too great; I prefer you as you are."

This day was the finest of Mina's life. Probably the pros-

pect of death and the generosity of the sacrifice she was making erased the last impulses of remorse.

The next day, long before sunrise, Alfred came to give her his hand, and helped her into a pretty promenade boat.

"Can you imagine a happiness greater than ours?" she said to Alfred as they headed for the lake.

"From this moment you belong to me, you are my wife," Alfred said. "And I promise to live and to come down to the shore to call to the boat out there. I shall stand here beside this cross."

Six o'clock was chiming at the moment when Mina was going to tell him who she was. She did not want her boat to proceed any distance from the shore, and the boatmen began fishing, which released her from their stares and consequently delighted her. On the stroke of eight, she saw Alfred running down to the shore. He was extremely pale. Mina had herself put on shore.

"He is wounded, perhaps dangerously," Alfred said to her.

"Take this boat, my friend. This accident will put you at the mercy of the authorities here; vanish for two days. Go to Lyons; I shall keep you informed of what is happening."

Alfred hesitated.

"Just think of what these people who are taking the waters here with your wife will say."

This observation made up Monsieur de Larçay's mind; he got in the boat.

The following day, Monsieur de Ruppert was out of danger; but he might have to remain in bed a month or even two. Mina saw him during the night, and was a model of grace and devotion.

"Are you not my *intended?*" she asked, with a falseness entirely natural. She persuaded him to accept a considerable

draft upon her banker in Frankfort. "I must go to Lausanne," Mina told him. "Before our marriage, I want to see you buy back your magnificent family mansion which your follies have forced you to sell. For this, I must dispose of a large estate I own near Custrin. Once you can walk, proceed with the sale of this estate; I shall send you power of attorney from Lausanne. Agree if you must to a lowering of the price of this estate, or discount the bills of exchange which you will receive for it. In any case, obtain ready money at all costs. If I marry you, it is only suitable that you should appear, upon signing the marriage contract, to be as rich as I."

The count did not have the slightest suspicion that Mina was treating him as an employee being rewarded with cash.

In Lausanne, Mina had the happiness of receiving in each post a letter from Alfred. Monsieur de Larçay was beginning to understand how much his duel was simplifying his position with regard to Mina and to his wife. "She is not guilty toward you," Mina wrote him: "You abandoned her first, and out of a crowd of agreeable men, perhaps she made an error in choosing Monsieur de Ruppert; but Madame de Larçay's happiness need not be diminished in terms of money." Alfred bestowed upon her an allowance of fifty thousand francs; this was more than half of his income. "What need have I of it?" he wrote to Mina. "I plan not to show myself in Paris for several years, when this absurd adventure will be forgotten."

"That is not at all what I want you to do," Mina wrote back. "You would cause a sensation when you return. Go show yourself in Paris for two weeks while public opinion is still concerned with you. Remember that your wife has done absolutely nothing wrong."

A month later, Monsieur de Larçay rejoined Mina in the

charming village of Belgirate, on Lago Maggiore, a few miles from the Borromean Islands. She was travelling under a false name; she was so deeply in love that she said to Alfred: "Tell Madame Cramer, if you like, that you are engaged to me, that you are my *intended,* as we say in Germany. I shall always receive you with delight, but never outside of Madame Cramer's presence."

Monsieur de Larçay believed that something was lacking in his happiness; but it would be impossible to find a happier period in the life of any man than the month of September Monsieur de Larçay spent with Mina on Lago Maggiore. Mina had found him so discreet that gradually she had abandoned the habit of bringing Madame Cramer along on their excursions.

One day, as they drifted along the lake, Alfred said to her, with a laugh: "Who are you, my sorceress? There is no way I can believe you are Madame Cramer's chambermaid, or even something better than that."

"Well, let's see," Mina replied, "what do you want me to be? An actress who has won a huge prize in a lottery, and who has chosen to spend a few years of her youth in an enchanted world? Or perhaps someone's mistress who after her lover's death has chosen to change character?"

"You might be that, and worse still, yet if tomorrow I were to hear of Madame de Larçay's death, I should ask for your hand in marriage the day after."

Mina flung herself into his arms. "I am Mina de Vanghel, whom you have seen at Madame de Cély's. How can you have failed to recognize me? It must be true that love is blind!" she added, with a laugh.

Whatever happiness Alfred took in being able to value Mina at her true worth, Mina's was still more intimate. Her

delight had been flawed by the necessity of hiding something from her beloved. In love, it is the deceiver who is always unhappy.

Yet Mademoiselle de Vanghel would have done well not to reveal her name to Monsieur de Larçay. At the end of a few months, Mina noticed a certain melancholy in Alfred. They had gone to Naples for the winter, with a passport which named them man and wife. Mina disguised none of her thoughts from her lover, and Mina's intelligence terrified his own. She imagined that he was regretting Paris; she begged him on her knees to spend a month there. He swore he had no such desire, but his melancholy persisted.

"I am placing my life's happiness at great risk," Mina said to him one day, "but your melancholy is more powerful than all my resolutions."

Alfred did not understand what she meant, but nothing equalled his intoxication when, in the afternoon, Mina said to him: "Take me to Torre del Greco."

She supposed she knew the cause of the melancholy she had perceived since becoming his, for he had been made perfectly happy. Intoxicated with love, Mina forgot all her ideals. "Death and a thousand deaths may come tomorrow," she resolved, "they will not be too many to pay for my happiness since the day Alfred fought his duel." She delighted in doing everything Alfred desired. Exalted by this felicity, she did not have the prudence to cast a veil over the extreme notions which constituted the very essence of her character. Her way of seeking happiness must appear not only singular to a commonplace soul, but even shocking. She had hitherto been careful to flatter in Monsieur de Larçay what she called his French prejudices; she needed to account to herself, by the difference in nationality, for what

she was compelled not to admire in him: here Mina felt the disadvantage of the unconventional education her father had bestowed upon her; this education might easily make her appear odious.

In her delight, she was indiscreet enough to think aloud in Alfred's presence. Fortunate the lover who, in this period of love, inspires *pity* in the beloved and not envy! She was so impassioned, in her eyes her lover was so much the type of all that was noble, fine, adorable in the world, that even had she desired to, she would not have had the courage to conceal any of her thoughts from him. To keep from him the deadly plot which had produced the events of the night in Aix was already, and for a long time now, an effort almost beyond her powers.

From the moment her sensual intoxication deprived Mina of the power to withhold utter frankness from Monsieur de Larçay, her rare qualities turned against her. She teased him about that melancholy she discerned in him. The love with which he inspired her soon rose beyond the last stage of madness. "How absurd I am to be distressed!" she decided at last. "It is because I love him more than he loves me. But what nonsense, to torment myself about a thing that always occurs in the intensest forms of happiness to be found on earth! Moreover, I have the misfortune of possessing a more uneasy nature than he, and after all, God is just," she added with a sigh (for remorse came often to trouble her happiness, ever since it had reached its apogee), "I have a great transgression to blame myself for: that night in Aix weighs upon my soul."

Mina grew accustomed to the notion that Alfred was destined by his nature to love less passionately than she. "Were he even less tender, it is still my fate to adore him. I

am happy enough, and lucky enough, that he has no wicked vices. I feel only too intimately that his crimes would cost me nothing, were he to seek my complicity in them."

One day, whatever Mina's illusions may have been, she was struck by the dark anxiety which seemed to be gnawing at Alfred's very soul. For a long time he had been planning to turn over to Madame de Larçay the income from all his property, to become a Protestant, and to marry Mina. On that day, the Prince de S—— was giving a party which was the talk of all Naples, and to which, of course, neither of the lovers was invited; Mina imagined that Alfred was regretting the privileges and the pleasures of a great fortune. She urged him to leave for Königsberg the very next day. Alfred lowered his eyes and made no answer. Finally he raised them and his gaze expressed the most painful suspicions, but not love. Mina was thunderstruck.

"Tell me one thing, Mina. The night I surprised Monsieur de Ruppert in my wife's room, did you have some knowledge of the count's intentions? In a word, were you in complicity with him?"

"Yes," Mina answered resolutely, "Madame de Larçay never had a thought for the count; I believed you belonged to me because I loved you. The two anonymous letters came from me."

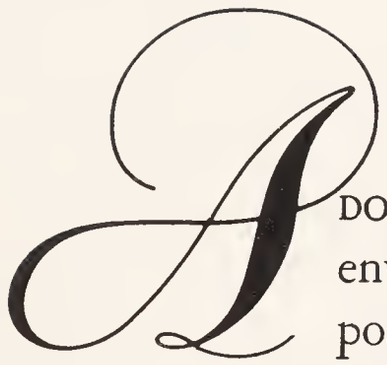
"That was a base action," Alfred answered coldly. "The spell is broken. I shall rejoin my wife. I pity you, and I no longer love you, Mina."

There was, in the tone of his voice, a perceptible note of violated self-love. He departed.

"This is what all great souls are exposed to, but they have their resources," she mused, as she walked to the window and watched her lover till he disappeared at the corner of

the street. Once he was out of sight, she went into Alfred's room, and shot herself through the heart with a pistol. Was her life a miscalculation? Her happiness had lasted eight months. Hers was too ardent a spirit to be content with the realities of life.

AFTERWORD



ADORED BY PROUST, ADMIRED BY VALERY, envied by Gide, Stendhal was far too prepossessing a *writer* to satisfy anyone—not Barthes, not Nietzsche, certainly not Henry James ("*Le Rouge et le Noir,* of all his books, comes nearest to being absolutely unreadable")—as merely a *novelist.* Least of all, in that capacity, could he satisfy himself; hence so many books unfinished, abandoned after hundreds of pages or—in the case at hand—after no more than a torso had been moulded, the armature of inspiration forsworn when the rapture waned.

That is why, perhaps, it is worthwhile having yet another of these *writings,* these renounced texts, available for the first time in English (even in French, *Le Rose et le Vert* was unpublished till the 1920s). Here is Stendhal at full strength if not full length, that crackling elliptical sensibility somewhere between Laclos and Tocqueville, and meriting a word about one or two characteristic features, characteristic problems, characteristics. First of all, the title, which seems virtually a parody of that other chromatic fan-

tasy so familiar to us and more or less understood to "represent" the Sword and the Soutane, the Red (the Army) and the Black (the Church). Nowhere in the pages written, or even in the ulterior notes, for this fragment does Beyle account for the suggestive symbolism of this second banner—why pink, why green? In French, of course, one hears *the prose and the verse* in *le rose et le vert,* almost concomitantly with the colors,* and there is a typical opposition between the ardent ideals of the transparent German heroine and the corrupt self-seeking of Parisian policy. But which is pink—color of hope or of weakness—and which is green—color of growth or of poison? Stendhal was too impatient to generate his oriflamme beyond a knowing wink, and we are left, quite rightly, with no more than the mystery.

Then, hard upon the title, one marvels at the perils of the premise, subjected to Beyle's scrutiny: that the acquisition of wealth was, by 1837, nakedly advanced as the supreme moral lesson, the ultimate truth, the definitive ethic of half a century of political and social experiment. It was a critique of this notion, this premise, this *conjuncture* which *The Pink and the Green* was to undertake, and though (judging from the sketch afforded by "Mina de Vanghel") he would have killed off his heroine as he inveterately disposed of his heroes in all his fictions, at least that heroine is sufficiently high-spirited and resourceful to enable the book to take wing in a somewhat less abstract fashion than in other instances, other forays. Whatever the resolutions, of

* It might be suspected that "rose" warrants more heft—especially in a title—than our English "pink" wields, but there is no excuse for the promotion; to a French ear, *"le" rose* is the color pink and affords none of the symbolic dignity that *the rose & the green* intimates to the historically alert Anglophone. Whatever Beyle had in mind, pink was its color—as Oliver Goldsmith says, "the very pink of perfection."

which we must remain ignorant, there is a certain invitation, in this torso of a novel, to enter (and for the translator, it is virtually a welcome) into the banausics of the matter. For here, after the mystery of the title and the purity of the premise, is an art quite different from mere—mere!—eloquence. In it there is a kind of painful tension under the disguise of the coolest and easiest style. What Valéry calls the restlessness of a superior mind; in any case, an ineloquent one. We might "place" Stendhal well enough by saying that he is utterly alien to eloquence (Hugo, for instance, who had no use for him, said he lacked "style"). This is an author whom we must reread from moment to moment, for he never repeats, and as Alain observes, never *develops.* It is not style he lacks, but rhythm. Stendhal never sweeps you away—he doesn't want to sweep you away: that would be against his principles. He engages your complicity, and for that you must be all attention. He is not to be read aloud, he is to be followed on the page, in the sentence, across the synapsis of his astonishing clauses, and the sense, the wit, the *literature* occurs in the gaps between the statements, very abruptly juxtaposed:

. . . A man of parts, he had formerly shown courage in battle; now he was inveterately in a state of alarm, suspecting he lacked that presence of mind commonly deemed necessary to the role of ambassador—M. de Talleyrand has spoilt the profession—and imagining he might give evidence of wit by talking incessantly.

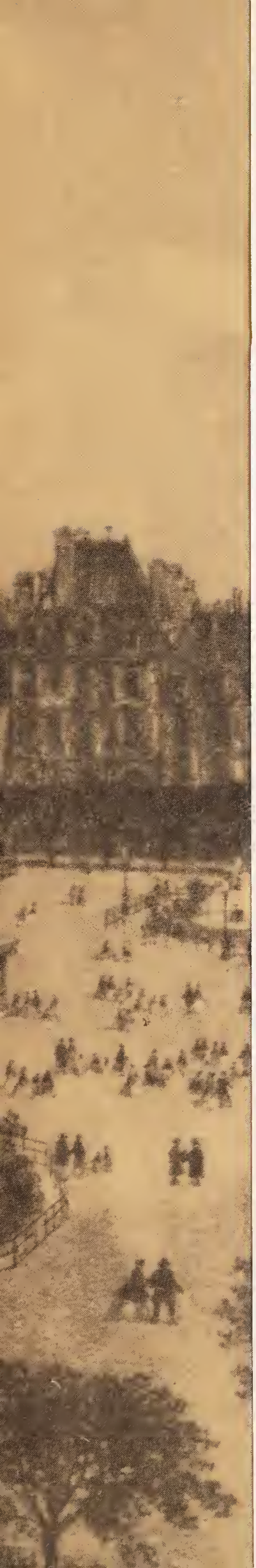
This is grasshopper prose, and there is no pleasure to be taken in it if it is not attended to by *presence of mind.* As the reference to Talleyrand suggests, we are being taken into the author's confidence, entrusted with the supposition of intellect—no other author flatters us to this degree.

A translator may observe that the scansion of a Stendhal

phrase is almost always dependent on that tendency of the French language to accent its abstract nouns on the final syllable: *la logique, le bonheur, l'esprit* (the Beylist trinity). This gives a certain determination to the run of the words, a certain *frappe,* as if the words were minted by a very sure mind. In a language not so disposed, the translator must find ways, and means, to afford the evidences of an analogous *mentality,* a power which separates, which finishes, which excludes.

We have been learning—it is the consequence of what James called our incomparable modernity—that there is a long view to be taken of French culture between Bonaparte and Pompidou. In literature, the novel's enterprise from Constant to Proust no longer is seen to *break down,* as observed in my youth, into so many grade-assigning and often invidious discriminations among Zola and Stendhal, Flaubert and Maupassant: we now see French fiction as a nuanced, even as a motley venture, but we see it as *one,* an immensely single, singular structure, nor is it any longer needful to patronize Balzac for his aspirations to style, Zola for his lack of them. James himself revealed Zola *as a poet* in his masterful essay of 1903, and a page of what is lately translated as Balzac's *A Harlot High and Low* will be seen to prophesy *and* fulfill Baudelaire . . . Minor productions—the Goncourts, say, or even the astonishments of Edouard Dujardin and Elémir Bourges—no longer constitute freakish wayside distractions, but are rather members of a grand (a Dantesque) epic, *splendors and miseries of the bourgeoisie.* Stendhal's moment in this epic is indeed momentous, and even in a fragmentary showing such as *The Pink and the Green,* we have much to gain, much to learn, much to love.

Richard Howard



(continued from front flap)

never sweeps you away," writes translator Richard Howard in his Afterword, "—he doesn't want to sweep you away: that would be against his principles. He engages your complicity, and for that you must be all attention." Mina herself, in both her guises, has that strange, compelling charm of Stendhal's great heroes and heroines: Julien Sorel *(The Red and the Black)* and Fabrizio del Dongo and his ferocious aunt, the Duchess de Sanseverina *(The Charterhouse of Parma)*. Pondering Stendhal's abandonment of his idea for the novel, Michel Déon of the Académie Française muses: "Seldom, in the entire history of literature, have we seen an author falling in love with his heroines so easily, and detaching himself from them so painlessly."

Jacket engraving La Mode, *1832; design by Sylvia Frezzolini*

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